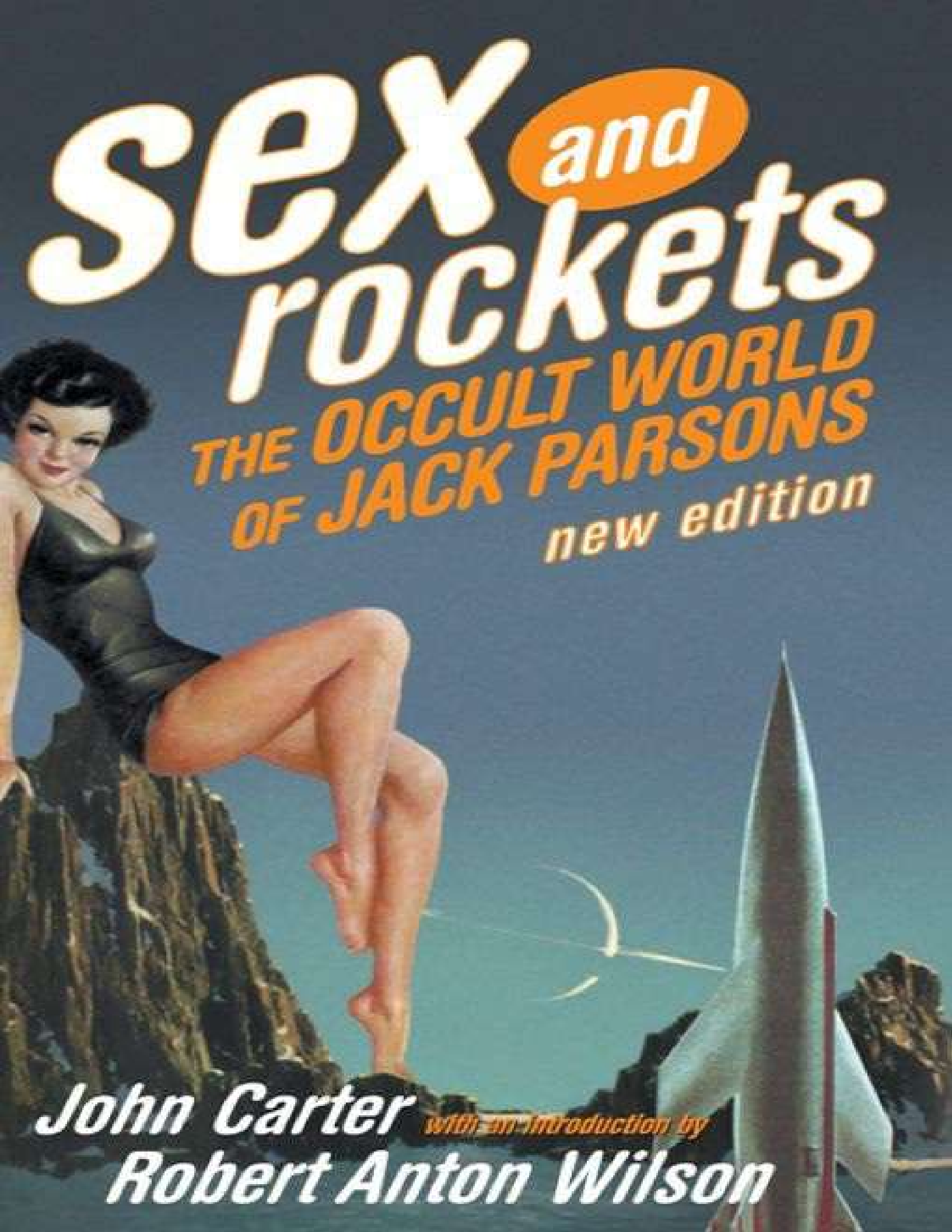
sex and rockets

THE OCCULT WORLD OF JACK PARSONS

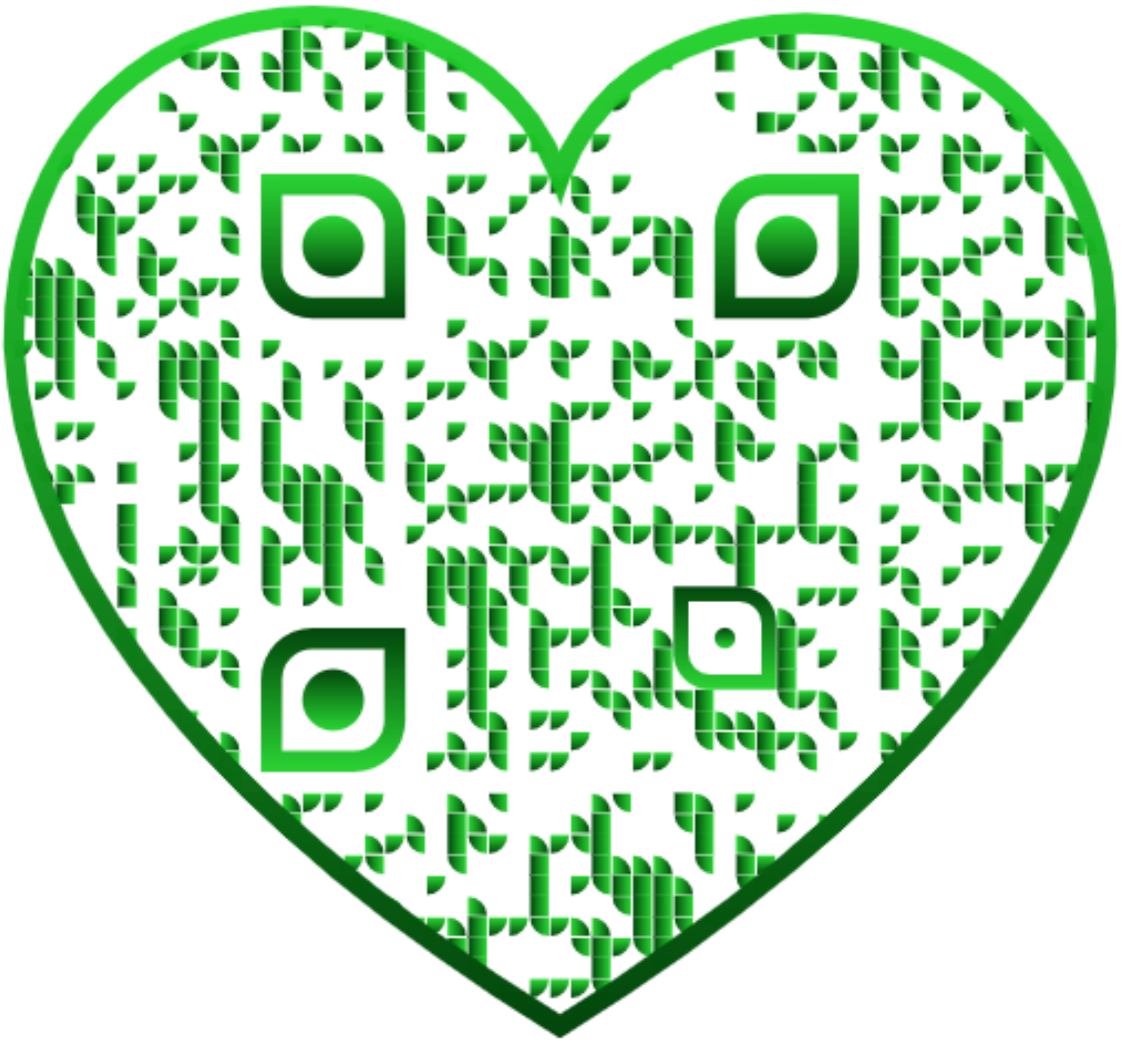
new edition



John Carter

with an Introduction by

Robert Anton Wilson



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Sex and Rockets

The Occult World of Jack Parsons

John Carter

Introduction by Robert Anton Wilson

A Marvel Walked Among Us

by Robert Anton Wilson

"I seem to be living in a nation that simply does not know what freedom is."

—John Whiteside Parsons [1]

This book tells the life story of a very strange, very brilliant, very funny, very tormented man who had at least three major occupations (or v ocations); he also had no less than four names. He acted as scientist, as occultist, as political dissident and often as a simple damned eejit (just lik e you and me).

Scientists, a ware of his tr emendous contributions to space science , generally call him John Parsons, and they've even named a crater on the moon after him. Those occultists who know of his work in their very specialized arts call him Jack P arsons, the name he himself pr eferred; in some magick lodges the y consider him second only to Aleister Cr owley as a pr ogenitor of the Ne w Aeon. His best-kno wn book, *Freedom Is A Two-Edged Swor d*, which incr easingly influences the libertarian and anarchist movements, gives his name as John Whiteside P arsons on the cover and title page. And, as the present biography documents, this odd bird actually had the legal name Marv el Whiteside Parsons imposed on him at birth.

Oh, well, if my parents had named me "Marv el," I w ould have changed my name, too, perhaps as often as Parsons did.

For utmost scientific clarity about matter s usually left in m ystic murk or psychobabble, I shall use all four of Our Hero's names: John Parsons for the scientist, John Whiteside P arsons for the libertarian philosopher, Jack P arsons for the occultist, and Marv el Parsons for the original template: an alienated and sometimes naiv e boy, a child of divorce, who tried to find and

liberate what occultists call his True Self by creating the other three Parsonspersons and permitting them to fight brutal wars in the loneliness of his passionate br ain until all three became One. When endured helplessly by a truly fractured personality, w e gener ally call this civil w ar in the ps yche Multiple Personality Disor der: when deliber ately pur sued as a path of Illumination leading through Hell and Purgatory toward a vision (at least) of Paradise, we have no name for it in our curr ent culture but those few who, lik e Parsons, have taken the hermetic oath to Will and Dar e and Kno w and K eep Silence simply call it magick (pr onounced mage-ick, as in the Three Magi).

Marvel Parsons, born in 1914 in Los Angeles but r aised mostly in the nearb y to wn of P asadena, began life lik e all of us in what Tibetans call the V oid and the Chinese call *wu-hsin* (no mind). Gradually, out of the V oid, form emer ged. He made the distinction between Marv el and Ev erything Else; a glass w all then separ ated Marvel from Everything Else. He gradually identified various parts of Everything Else, as soon as he learned their names.

Fatherless, Marvel had a conserv ative middle class mother who loved him a bit too ar dently (she committed suicide within a fe w hours after his death, 17 June 1952). She also taught him to hate his absent father, a pr oven " adulterer." (Horrors!) Developing an early interest in psychology, Marvel diagnosed himself as having a classic Oedipus complex, a compulsiv e antipathy to "P atriarchy" (he used the word before the Feminists made it trendy) and an equally intense loathing for an y and all A uthority s ymbols, especially "God the Father."

But let us look at 19 14, the year of Parsons' birth, more closely. Whatever you think of astrology, with its extraterrestrial bias, a "secular horoscope" limited to Earthly portents always provides amusing insights. The terrestrial world that shaped Marvel Parsons looked like this:

The First World War had started on July 28 that year; before 1914 ended the fir st aerial bombing of civilian populations occurr ed (Germany did it to F rance), and the bloody battles of the Marne , Tannerberg, Ghent and especially Ypres demonstrated that "civilized" modern humans could act even more inhumanely and insanely than any barbarians of the past.

Police arr ested the legendary labor her o Joe Hill in Utah on January 13 for

a murder he almost certainly did not commit, and the State executed him the follo wing year. His last w ords, “Don’t w eep for me , bo ys—organize!” became a mantr a to union member s for decades after.

In Colorado, John D. R ockefeller’s hired goons killed 2 1 people (including 11 children) in a clash with other labor “radicals.” Leftists protested outside R ockefeller’s New York office and got arr ested for it: a court order banned any other people with signs or banners from parading in fr ont of that sacr osanct shrine of the Almighty Dollar . Novelist Upton Sinclair appear ed the ne xt da y with a blank sign, telling reporters that free speech had died. Suffr agettes marched on Washington June 28, demanding equal rights for w omen.

In England, *Dubliners*, the fir st book b y an Irish author named James Jo yce, appear ed; and in America Edgar Rice Burr oughs brought forth *Tarzan of The Apes* . Musically, w e all acquir ed three major treasures, “The Colonel Boge y Mar ch,” “Saint Louis Blues” and “12th Str eet R ag.” In film, D.W . Griffith’ s *The Mother and the Law* rawly showed the abuse of women by “the Patriarchy.”

Margaret Sanger intr oduced the term “birth contr ol” in *The Woman Rebel* and then fled to England to avoid imprisonment for the “crime” of publishing explicit details on contraception.

Charles T aze R ussell, founder of the Jeho vah’s Witnesses , announced that the apocalypse w ould begin on October 2—coincidentally or synchronistically, the very day Marvel Whiteside Parsons [who w ould later , as Jack Parsons, call himself the AntiChrist] emerged from his mother’ s womb, or from even darker places, and began to investigate and meddle with this planet.

Going back to England again: also in 19 14, Aleister Cr owley (rhymes with “holy”) and his curr ent mistr ess, violinist Leila Waddell, staged something called “The Rites of Eleusis” in London—several nights of quasi-masonic ritual, music, poetry, ballet and drama. On the first night, the actors informed the audience, Nietzsche-fashion, that “God is dead” and mourned and grie ved over the departed deity: things became even stranger after that, like the bardos in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* , and on the last night the audience received “The Elixir of the Gods,” a wine containing a high dosage

of the ps ychedelic drug mescaline . While the y willynilly enter ed Chaos and the V oid a chorus announced the dawning of a New Aeon based on R abelais' Law of Thelema—"Do What Thou Wilt" . . .

And Doublemint chewing gum appeared on the market, produced by William Wrigley . . .

All of this undeniably influenced Marv el as much as , or mor e than, an y distant star s or planets . The horr ors of W orld W ar imprinted him with a wounded perception of the dark side of "human nature": some parts of *Freedom Is A Two-Edged Sword* sound as bitter as S wift or Twain at their most misanthr opic. Marvel also acquired a genuine sympathy for working people, and an awareness of the brute for ce behind Capitalism and Capitalist Go vernments never left him: although an ultr a-individualist himself. he had mor e than one Marxist friend (which got him virtually tarred and feathered during the McCarthy era).

> Standing there as big as life
> And smiling with those eyes:
> "What they forgot to kill," said Joe
> "Went on to organize."

Margaret Sanger and the suffr agettes also left a mark: no male writer since John Stuart Mill in the 19th Century has sho wn more empathy for Feminism than John Whiteside Parsons.

"Saint Louis Blues" helped cr eate the Jazz A ge in which Marv el began to evolve from boy to man. And, like Russell and the Jehovah's Witnesses, he grew up convinced that the w orld had entered a life-and-death battle between Cosmic (or at least Archetypal) Forces—but he enlisted on the side of the rebels, since he hated what we now call the logophallocentrism of "God the F ather" even more than our current crop of Feminist theologians do. Although (as noted) he could see the Oedipal roots of this bias, he also perceived/conceived it as a decision for Light and Liberty against Tyranny and Superstition.

Aleister Crowley and his New Aeon would later transform Marvel into Jack Parsons.

I don't know how Wrigley's Doublemint gum fits into this list of terrestrial

Signs and Omens surr ounding the genesis of Marv el Parsons. But I feel sure some student of Crowleyana will write to me and explain it after this book appears.

Then another major influence mutated Marv el Parsons into John Parsons and John Whiteside P arsons and Jack P arsons: in his teens he disco vered a despised and disr eputable genr e of pulp liter ature confusingly known (at the time) as either science-fiction or science-fantasy. Seen from the present, the sci-fi crowd of that age look lik e closet surrealists who had re-invented the Novel Of Ideas and tailored it for magazines with names lik e *Thrilling Wonder Tales*. The uncertainty about what to call their product typified the age of accelerated change in which Parsons and this literature both matured: after Jules Verne's "fantas y" submarine appear ed in the w orld's r eal seas , nobody with more brain cells than a chimpanzee or a Fundamentalist felt totally secur e about the differ ences betw een the pr obable, the improbable and the totally impossible.

If V erne's submarine could become materialized, wh y not his rocket to the moon? The question excited a lot of other boys besides Marvel Parsons: but, unlike most of them, he did something about it. He became John Parsons, almost certainly (as this book documents) the one single individual who contributed the most to rocket science. Two of the institutions he helped or ganize, the Jet Pr opulsion Laboratory at P asadena and the A erojet Corporation, still play large roles in space exploration.

You will learn mor e about John Parsons' acknowledged scientific achievements in the text to follow: I will concentrate on his other, still controversial labor s. Just r emember that when he started building rockets they seemed as "w acko" to most people as an ything else he did. Y et his car eful scientific e xperiments and theories liber ated humanity from Terracentrism and showed us the path to a starry destiny.

Rocket engineer John Parsons also became friendly with the leading "fantasy" and "sci-fi" writer s in the Los Angeles/P asadena area and entered a subculture in which no idea seemed too cr azy to discuss: a world where established science, fringe science, pseudo-science, philosophic speculation and visionary imagination all r an wild—in short, a world which anticipated and helped generate most of the "w eird and k ooky" ideas which ha ve no w

infiltr ated e very aspect of our cultur e, e xcept for the most r eactionary Stone A ge enclaves of Mississippi and the U.S. Congress.

It did not require much of a jump, then or now, to move from the Futurist-Fantasist w orld into Se x, Drugs and Magick. If y ou r eally enjoyed the *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* movies; or if y ou ever, even in fun, told a friend "Live long and prosper" or "May the Force be with you"; or pla yed Dungeons and Dr agons, smoked a joint no w and again, participated to an y degree in the Ne w Age and/or the Neo-Pagan r evival—two popularized (diluted) aspects of Cr owley's New Aeon—or e ven if y ou e ver w anted to get the go vernment off our fronts (sexual freedom) as well as off our backs (market freedom)—you have received part of the huge legac y of Jack P arsons and his merry crew of science buffs, sorcerers and subversives.

Look at it this w ay: in John P arsons' 193 0s-1940s sci-fantas y world, everybody he knew had already started discussing the possible "humanity" and "human rights" of e xtraterrestrials and r obots; they created alternate societies much more rational and adventurous than most "normal" people of that time could possibly imagine; they assumed (partly due to the influence of Alfred Korzybski and General Semantics) that information and technology would further accelerate their synergetic accelerations even faster than they had in the pr evious century (Parsons' friend, sci-fi-psi author A.E. van Vogt had studied with K orzybski per sonally); the y cr eated Alternative Worlds where anything currently considered goofy—from new economic systems to long-suppr essed Gnostic doctrines—might function as efficiently as the pencil sharpener.

Robert Anson Heinlein, another friend of P arsons, wrote a novel, *Waldo*, in which all the arts of magick ha ve not only w on scientific acceptance but have become technologies used daily by everybody. Heinlein also wrote, a bit later, *Stranger In A Strange Land*, the first sci-fi novel to reach the *New York Times* bestseller list, and some still say Jack P arsons' magick/libertarian ideas permeate e very page of it—*pax*, Mr. Carter!

To leave the heady and trippy environment of chaps like van Vogt and Heinlein, and to encounter and endure the Official Reality of the U.S. of those days probably seemed to Parsons like time travel back to the Dark Ages.

In that Official Reality, Christian piety and Capitalist predation coexisted as equally sacr ed Idols, even though the y totally contr adict each other. Stupidity, superstition and intoler ance imprisoned most Americans in medie val squalor, both mental and economic: man y humans did not ha ve the "humanity" or "human rights" that Parsons' friends would grant to technically sophisticated robots (e.g. all those humans who had dark er complexions than Sno w White ranked as *non or-sub-human* in popular opinion and in law. We actually fought a war against fascism with a racially segregated army.) Almost all r ational or adv enturous ideas encounter ed blind bigotry and often violent per secution; contr aception, div orce and abortion still remained illegal either locally or feder ally; homose xuality and bisexuality did not exist, or at least nobody in the major media could admit that they did exist; sex in general seemed so "dirty" that in the films of that time e ven married couples slept in separ ate beds, lest anyone suspect that the y might occasionally fuck each other; all of the other delights of lo ve enjoyed by most spouses r emained illegal with penalties r anging as high as 2 0 years imprisonment; r eligious nutcases similar to F alwell and R obertson not only peddled hatr ed and intolerance to a gullible public , but nobody dar ed to fight back or even make cynical jokes about them; when the first scientific report on human sexuality appeared, its author, Dr. Alfred Kinsey, got hit with everything but flying monkey-shit—according to his research associate, Dr . P omeroy, Kinse y literally died pr ematurely from the abuse he suffered.

Of course, irrational fear and superstition still stalk this nation; but in those days, they totally *dominated* it.

Parsons could only conclude that Americans, who claimed to love freedom, actually fear ed it, hated it and w anted to smother it with more and more tyrannical laws. They had willingly surrendered their liberty to "lying priests , conniving judges, blackmailing police" and other servitors of tyranny, as he wrote in 1946.

But John Parsons, jet propulsion pioneer, had by then become Jack Parsons, se x-magician—after he disco vered and joined the Or do Templi Orientis.

The Ordo Templi Orientis alleges that it descends directly from the 18th Century Illuminati of Ba varia. Let us look into that for a moment.

WHO PUT THE LIGHT IN EN-LIGHT-ENMENT?

"I need not add that fr eedom is a dangerous thing. But it is har dly possible that we are all cowards."

—John Whiteside Parsons [2]

Amid endless controversy about them, all agree that the Bavarian Illuminati began on May 1, 1776, in Ingolstadt, Bavaria, created by a Freemason (and former Jesuit) named A dam Weishaupt. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* , the Illuminati managed to influence many masonic lodges and gained " a commanding position" in the movement of anti-r oyalist, anti-P apist and pr o-democratic "secular humanism." They attracted such literary men as Goethe and Her der but the whole movement came to an end when the Bavarian government banned the Illuminati in 1785. So says the standard reference.

Many conspiracy hunters have more faith in the decidedly par anoid *Memoirs Of Jacobinism* of Abbe Augustin Barruel, who believed that the Illuminati mer ely regrouped under other fr ont names after 1785, masterminded the F rench Revolution and still continued until the time he wr ote (1806). Modern anti-Illuminists think it still continues toda y, although the y often disagr ee as to whether the Illuminati r eally pr omotes secular humanism. Most F undamtalists think the y do, but other s with liv elier fantasies suspect them of unleashing Jazz, R ock 'n' R oll, communism, fascism, anar chism, Satanism, international banking, ritual child abuse , or some combination thereof.

According to masonic historian Albert G. Mack ey, the Illuminati at its peak had only 2000 members in masonic lodges in France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, S weden, P oland, Hungary , and Italy . Mack ey emphasizes that Bar on Knigge, one of the most po werful and activ e members of the Illuminati, remained a devout Christian all his life and would not have

worked so har d for the or der if it r eally intended, as Abbe Barruel and others claim, the abolition of Christianity.

A ne w Or der of the Illuminati appear ed in 1880, founded by Freemasonic druggist Theodor R euss in Munich. In 1896 R euss, and fellow occultists Leopold Engel and F ranz Hartmann co-founded the Theosophical Society of Germany, and in 1901 Engel and R euss produced or for ged a charter giving them authority o ver the r e-established Illuminati of W eishaupt. In 190 1, R euss, Hartmann and metallurgist Karl Kellner founded the Ordo Templi Orientis and about 1912 Reuss conferred the 9th degree of the Ordo Templi Orientis upon Aleister Cr owley, claiming that Cr owley alr eady kne w the occult secret of that degr ee. (Cr owley—rhymes with holy , r emember?—already possessed the 33r d degree of the Scottish Rite and the 97th degree of the Order of Memphis and Mizraim.) Reuss later appointed Crowley his successor as Outer Head of the Orlo Templi Orientis. The Inner Head presumably remains invisible and unavailable to the unIlluminated. (Hint: meditate on the Zen k oan, “What w onderful magician makes the grass green?”)

Crowley includes A dam W eishaupt, the founder of the 18th Century Illuminati, among the Holy Saints in his Gnostic Catholic Mass, performed regularly in all Ordo Templi Orientis lodges. But that list of Holy Saints also includes also such odd blokes as King Arthur, Mohammed, P arsifal, Buddha, R abelais, P ope Ale xander Bor gia, Swinburne, Paracelsus, Sir Francis Bacon, John Dee, Goethe, Wagner, Nietzche, Simon Magus, King Ludwig II (“the mad king of Ba varia”) and painter Paul Gauguin . . .

Before dying, Crowley appointed one Karl Germer (a survivor of a Nazi concentration camp) his successor as Outer Head, but Germer himself neglected to attend to that little detail, and when he died suddenly several claimants arose. I counted 1005 competing Outer Heads at one time in the mid-1980s , myself among them. (I had r eceived that honor from a group of rebels against Kenneth Grant, an embattled Outer Head in London, who still calls himself the only real Outer Head. I always carry the card Grant’s disloyal opposition sent me; it says “The Bear er of This Car d is a Genuine and A uthorized Outer Head of the Or do Templi Orientis , so PLEASE treat him right” and magically/anachronistically has the signature of Aleister Crowley—or of a skillful forger.)

Over on this side of the pond, the feder al courts have ruled that the title of Ordo Templi Orientis belongs only and always to the guys and gals r epresented on the W orld Wide W eb and ha ve further granted it tax-exempt status as a charitable corporation and religious entity. This gr oup descends dir ectly fr om the 193 0s -1940s A gape Lodge of the OTO, the one that Jack Parsons once led.

As we mentioned, Aleister Cr owley became an initiate of the OTO in 1912. This happened because he had published a mystic treatise and/or book of dirty jok es perversely or par adoxically entitled *The Book Of Lies (F alsely So Called).* The Outer Head at that time , Theodore R euss came to Cr owley and said that, since he , Crowley, knew the secret of the 9th degr ee, he had to accept that r ank in the OTO and its attendant obligations. Crowley protested that he knew no such secret but R euss showed him a cop y of *The Book Of Lies* and pointed to a chapter which r evealed the gr eat secr et quite openly . Crowley looked at his own words and "It instantly flashed upon me . The entire symbolism not only of F ree Masonry but of man y other traditions blazed upon my spiritual vision . . . I under stood that I held in my hands the k ey to the futur e pr ogress of humanity ." [3] Crowley, of course, does not tell us which chapter contains the secet. You can spend man y happ y hour s, da ys, ma ybe e ven months or years, pouring over that cryptic volume seeking the right chapter and the final secret.

We should remember at this point that e ven before his inv olvement with the OTO Aleister Crowley also received training, sometimes briefly and sometimes lasting much longer , in such tr aditions as Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sufism; and we should note that he majored in organic chemistry at Cambridge Univ ersity. He often reiterated his commitment to "the method of science, the aim of religion." His work as Outer Head turned the OTO in radical new directions, both scientific and sexual.

Now it gets really scary for the Fundamentalists.

SEX AND DRUGS AND ROCK AND ROLL

"In these experiences the ego will be totally alter ed or completely destroyed in the death that must pr ecede a rebirth into life. The ter ror, agony and despair that accompany this process

cannot be minimized."

—John Whiteside Parsons [4]

Two recent books that shed some light on all these murky matters deserve some attention at this point—*The Hiram Key and The Second Messiah*.[5] The author s of both books , Knight and Lomas , both Freemasons themselves, claim that they have received "support and congratulations" from "hundr eds" of other masons—athough the y admit that their research has been greeted with hostile silence by the United Gr and Lodge of England, one of the mor e conserv ative masonic bodies.

Basically, Knight and Lomas try to pr ove that masonry not only dates back to ancient Egypt—as only the most R omantic masons have hitherto claimed—but that it also served as a major influence on "Jerusalem Christianity ," the earliest form of the Christian faith, which St. Paul and other se x-maniacs persecuted and drove underground. When the official Romish Christianity became dominant, primordial or "Jerusalem" Christianity surviv d by hiding within various Gnostic "her esies," Knight and Lomas sa y, and became a major force again only when rediscovered and accepted as their own secret inner doctrine by the Knights T emplar. When the T emplars were condemned by the Inquisition (13 08) the suriviv ors used v arious other names until emerging again as "Freemasons" in the 17th or 18th Centuries.

Parts of this thesis ha ve appear ed in other books—the underground survival of primordial Christianity, for instance, underlies the entire argument of the famous *Holy Blood, Holy Gr ail* by Baigent, Lincoln and Leigh—but Knight and Lomas ha ve put the puzzle together in a more convincing way an any of their precursors.

But what about the original Egyptian "m ystery" out of which this underground tr adition emer ged? Do Knight and Lomas attempt to delve that far back and claim to find a convincing answ er?

Indeed they do.

The centr al masonic "m yth" of the wido w's son, Hir am—the builder of

Solomon’ s temple , mur dered for r efusing to r eveal “the mason word” to three ruffians—derives from actual events in Egypt, they aver. The “mason w ord” does not mean a “w ord” in the usual sense but acts as coded euphemism indicating a secr et. (“Another damned secret?” I can hear y ou howl. Patience!)

Every ne w phar aoh, befor e ascending the thr one, had to visit heaven and become accepted among the gods . Only after this otherworldly journey could the pharoah be accepted by the priests, *and by himself*, as one fit to fulfill the divine , as well as political, functions of kingship, as conceiv ed in those da ys. This v oyage to the highest stars, where the gods live, involved a magick ritual emplo ying what Knight and Lomas call a “nar cotic.” When the last phar aoh of the native dynasty refused to reveal the secrets of this ritual to the ne w Hyskos dynasty, they killed him in the manner of the wido w’s son. The lost “w ord” = the details of the Ritual of Illumination and the name of the “narcotic” used.

It seems to me that Knight and Lomas have this last detail wrong, due to their ignor ance of ps ycho-pharmacology. Nar cotics do not allow you to walk among the stars and communicate with superhuman intelligences. They kill pain, they numb anxiety, they knock you unconscious; and the y usually get y ou addicted: that’ s all the y do. Almost certainly, the magick potion used in the ritual did not belong to the narcotic family but to the entheogens —the type of drugs also called psychedelics. Entheogens produce “mystic” and godly e xperiences, and at least one of them, and perhaps tw o, had widespr ead religious usage among the Indo-Eur opean peoples fr om ancient times, *Amanita muscaria* definitely and *psilocybin* possibly, both of them members of the “magic mushr oom” group.

You can easily find learned w orks supporting this interpretation of how humanity fir st became a ware of Higher Intelligences . See espcially Pujarich’ s *The Sacr ed Mushr oom,* Allegro’s *The Sacr ed Mushroom and the Cr oss,* Wasson’s *Soma: Divine Mushr oom of Immortality,* Wasson et al., *Persephone’s Quest: Entheogens and the Origins of Religion,* LeBarre’s *Ghost Dance: Origins of R eligion,* Peter Lamborn Wilson’ s *Ploughing the Clouds: The Sear ch for Irish Soma,* my own *Sex, Drugs and Magick*—and especially see T erence McKenna’s *Food of the Gods ,* which argues that all e xisting religions evolved from paleolithic rituals using entheogens and gr oup

se x to achieve ego-tr anscendence and cosmic consciousness . You can still see the ancient se xual symbolism even in such r omish ikons as the Sacred Heart and the Cr oss: the former does not look like a heart at all but like a tumescent vagina and the latter has the shape of a penis and testicles.

Jack P arsons' magick and John P arsons' science ha ve a closer unity than most people can imagine. They both aimed at the stars.

By the w ay, all o ver northern Eur ope tr aditional art sho ws the fairy-people and sor cerers surrounded by mushr ooms, usually the "liberty cap" mushroom, now identified as psilocybin, the same used by Native American shamans for around 4000 years. The Irish Gaelic name for this fabulous fungus , *Pokeen,* means little god. ("Little fairy" in modern Gaelic , but *pook* derives ultimately fr om *bog*, the Indo-European root for "god.")

Crowley spoke for this tradition when he said true religion always invokes Dion ysus, Aphrodite and the Muses , which he also called "wine, women and song."

Nowadays we call this magick trinity Se x and Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll, and celebrate them at Raves that hauntingly resemble the earliest stirrings of cosmic questing b y ancestors who dressed in animal skins and looked even more like gorillas than we do.

I have saved the worst shock to "good, decent Americans" for the end of this section. In 1986, r esearchers found another (appr oximately) 2000-year-old manuscript near the same Nag Hammadi caves where the "Dead Sea Scr olls" had come to light. T ranslated into English by Mohammed al-Murtada and Francis Bendik under the title *The Secret Book Of Judas Of K erioth,* this text depicts Jesus as the bisexual lo ver of both Mary Magdelene and St. John, and also describes the Last Supper as an entheogenic sacr ament inv olving magic mushrooms. It has an intr oduction and running commentary by Dr. Maxwell Selander of Briggs-Melton Theological Seminary and you can get a cop y from Abrasax Books in Corpus Christi, T exas. It will blow the circuits of any Fundamentalists you know . . .

Sort of sounds like the historical Jesus (as distinguished fr om the mythical Christ) had a lot in common with Jack P arsons, doesn't it?

"The time to fight for fr eedom is the time when fr eedom is threatened,

not the time when fr eedom is destroyed, for that later time is too late.
Freedom is thr eatened now, the destr uction of fr eedom is not far of f.
Now is the time to fight."

—John Whiteside Parsons [6]

In every state of the Union, Fundamentalists still fight to ban all the science they dislike and prosecute all who teach it. To them, "traditional family values" denotes their right to k eep their children as ignorant as their grandparents (and to hate the same folks gr and-dad hated.)

Our government's war against "sin," i.e. against all forms of individual taste and whims y, currently costs the taxpa yers (federal and local) 450 billion dollars ($450,000,000,000) *every year*, according to Peter Mc Williams[7] . This makes up the bill for all forms of government interference in people' s private liv es—i.e. the footless and hopeless attempt to stomp out " consensual" or "victimless" crimes—porno, prostitution, gambling, r ecreational or r eligious use of entheogens , etc. Who decides what consensual or victimless acts should become "crimes"? The so-called Christians who dr ove original "Jerusalem Christianity" underground, established the Holy Inquistion and still seem to suffer from what H.L. Mencken called "the haunting fear that somebody, somewhere, might be ha ving a good time": the "lying priests, conniving judges , blackmailing police" denounced b y John Whiteside Parsons in 1946. (Crowley, with his usual flair for humorous melodrama, called them the Black Brotherhood in his books, and it took me years to figure out whom he meant . . .)

In Ne wark, California, r ecently, police br oke into the home of a Korean family, beat them all up and smashed all their furnitur e and dishes while allegedly looking for *verboten* drugs. They found no drugs, but the narcs explained to the press, "This is war." [8]

In Minneapolis , mor e tr agically, the police also br oke into the home of an elderly black couple, using flash-bang grenades which set the building on fire and killed both husband and wife . They offered the same "explanation" as in Newark: "This is war." [9]

As Oliv er Steinber g wr ote, “It is inaccur ate to speak of a W ar on Drugs . . . You don’t lock drugs up in jail, you lock up people . . . You can’t kill drugs—you kill people. Our government is not waging a war on drugs—it is waging a war on the people.” [10]

Due to a strange and nefarious union of the F undamentalists and the fanatic wing of Feminism, we have had more than 60 witch-hunts or Satanic Panics since 1980. Thousands of lives ruined, mass hysterias, millions of dollars wasted on prosecutions that usually collapsed in court for lack of real evidence: a large price to pay for the destruction of the Bill of Rights. After digging in countless “mass gr aves” of alleged victims of human sacrifice, the FBI’s Behavioral Science Unit, which deals with serial killers, found no victims at all, at all, and concluded that the whole mania had no basis in fact —which led, of course, to charges that the FBI itself functioned as part of the Satanic conspiracy.[11]

And none of this has an ything to do with the original Jerusalem Christianity. It emerged only from the Papist pretenders in Rome and their Protestant imitators, who make up the whole of what most people think of as “Christianity.”

Nietzsche, who lived too soon to learn of that original Christianity regarded what passes under that label as the w orst disaster to e ver befall humanity. As he wrote in *The Antichrist*:

The hatred of intellect, of pride, courage, fr eedom of intellect, is Christian; the hatred of the senses, of the delights of the senses, of all delight, is Christian . . . the concepts of “the other world,” “the last judgement,” “the immor tality of the soul,” “soul” itself: they are torture instruments, they are systems of cruelty by which the priests became masters. [12]

Against this s ystem of cruelty Nietzsche r ebelled; and Cr owley rebelled; and Jack P arsons rebelled: and because of them w e now stand on the brink of an explosion of consciousness that literally can extend our minds and carry our bodies to the farthest star s.

“No God. No Master.”

—Margaret Sanger [13]

As you have gathered by now, I do not regard Parsons and Crowley as Black Magicians or Satanists or an ything of that sort. Magick has many aspects, but primarily it acts as a dr amatized system of “ps ychology” (or neuro-linguistic meta-programming) to train us to break out of the cage of the socially conditioned ego and, b y plunging directly into the Chaos and Void from which we emerged, experience a rebirth into a ne w sense of self, of w orld, and of chaos and v oid, knowing directly, by experience, that all these names hide the same hidden unity—the w onderful magician who mak es the grass green, makes the sad man sad, mak es the angry w oman angry, and makes the loving heart overflow with further love endlessly.

Dr. John Lilly called this pr ocess “metapr ogramming the human bio-computer”; Dr . Timothy Leary , conscious of his debts to both Crowley and Parsons, called it “serial r e-imprinting” of our “r eality-tunnel.”

As Terence McKenna often says in his lectures, you can do all this by yoga —but only if you can spare seven years of your life, or longer, sitting around an ashram meditating. Magick works faster, especially when united with the ancient shamanic ecstasies of full se xual release and the proper en-theo-gens.

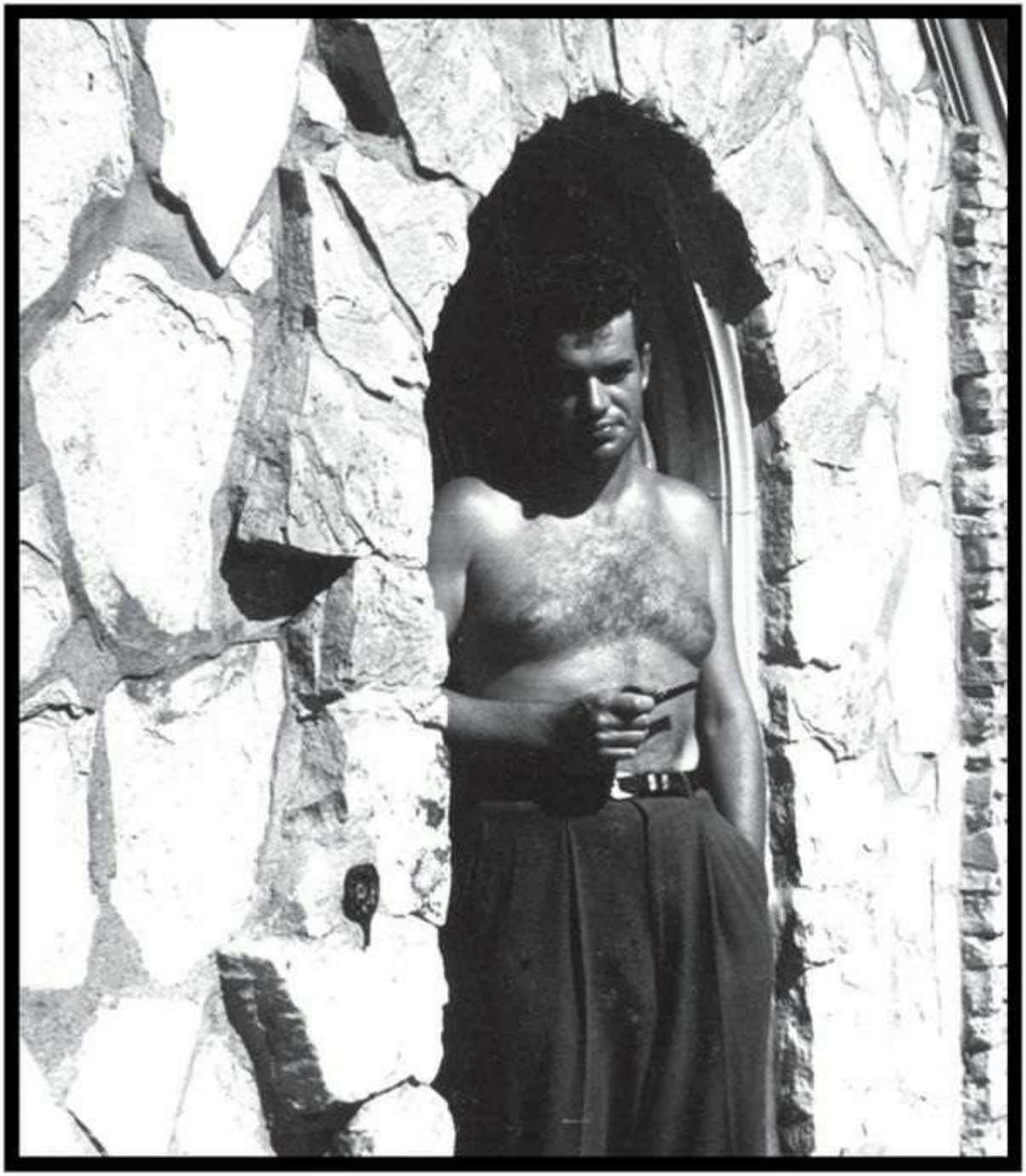
Crowley said, and Parsons liked to quote him on this, “THERE IS NO GOD BUT MAN .” (That sounds “se xist” these days, but y ou all kno w what he meant. He also said “ EVERY MAN AND EVER Y WOMAN IS A STAR.”) To confuse this with atheism seems to me as wildly off the mark as confusing it with “Satanism.” It quite simply means that all ideas/perceptions/experiences of the divine or the immortal r efer directly back to the latent powers of the mind that contains them. (In this context, see John 10:34.)

As Jack Parsons knew, and as F reudians will readily see for themselves, the whole magick al struggle in P arsons’ Babalon W orking recounted in Chapters Seven and Eight unleashed, on one level, a violent confrontation with Marv el’s Oedipus Comple x. Babalon r epresents the Mother and the Whore, the opposite archetypes of the male mind. To say it aloud, when

making love to Babalon as Cameron, Jack Parsons did consciously what all men do unconsciously: he fucked his mother. After 2 000 years of Christian se x-hate and se x-guilt, only in that total life-and-death battle with all inner inhibitions could he achieve that liberation which all of us seek, all of us fear, and all of us confront eventually, in the hour of our death, when w e finally don’t give a damn anymore about what other people think.

“Only in the irrational
and unknown direction
can we come to
wisdom again.”

—John Parsons, letter to Cameron, 1946



Preface

“**H**ow shall I write of the m ystery and the terror, of the wonder and pity and splendor of the se v-enfold star that is Babalon?” I shall tell of the tr agic life of her most devoted disciple and belo ved son—known to her as F rater Belarion, and to the world of men as Jack Parsons.

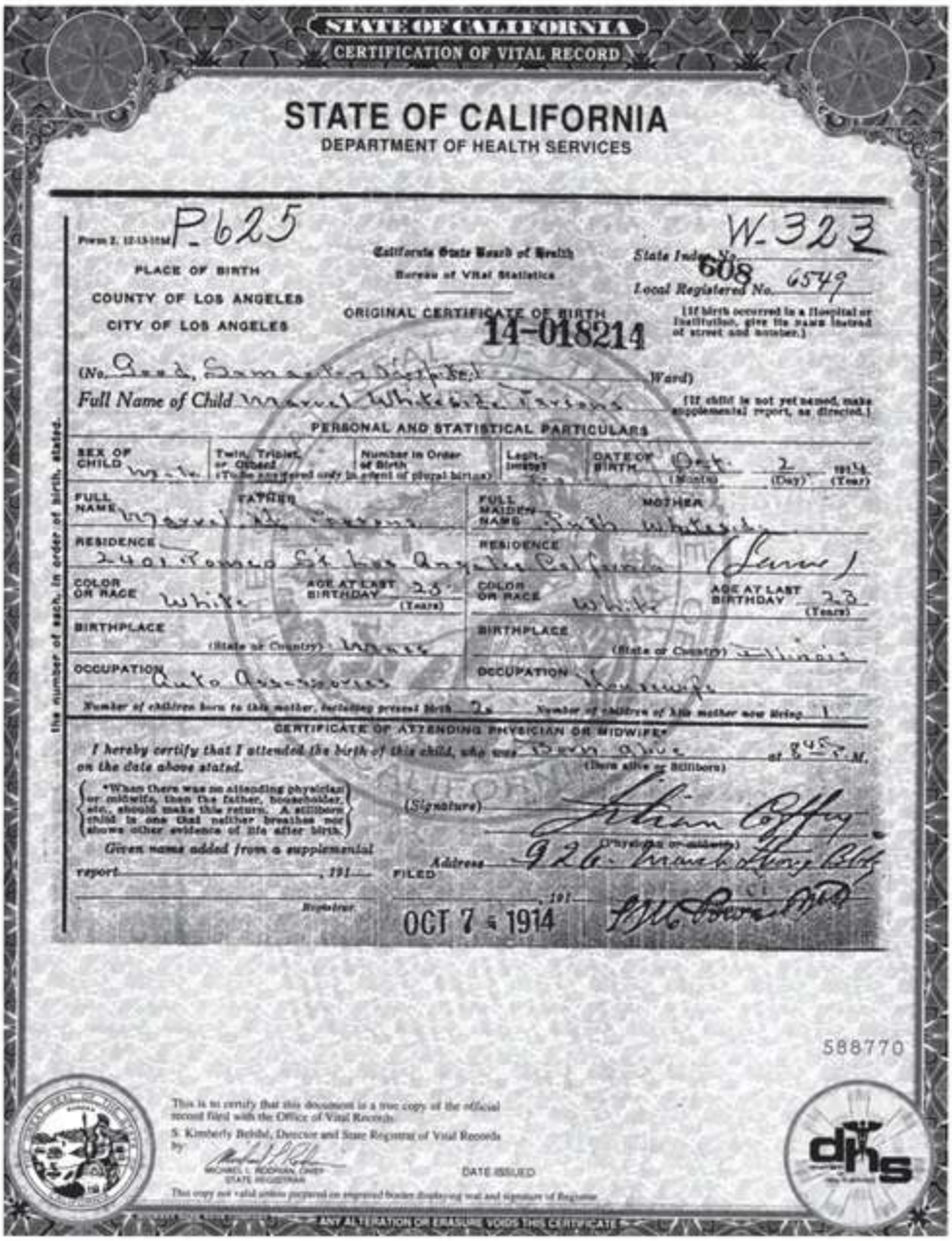
In *The Rebirth of P an*, Jim Br andon says that “Parsons” is one of the few names that turns up repeatedly in reports of anomalous phenomena. He does not mention Jack Parsons by name, but I think we shall see that the attribution is fitting. “P arson Jack,” for instance , was a de vil along the lines of the better kno wn “Springheel Jack” who accosted astonished villager s. Our Jack w as likewise hounded by his own devils.

In the aerospace world, there is a joke that “ JPL”—the initials for Jet Pr opulsion Labor atory—actually stand for “Jack P arsons’ Laboratory” or even “Jack Parsons Lives.” How would y ou react to the statement that one of the Jet Pr opulsion Laboratory’s founding fathers was a practicing ceremonial magician who attempted to summon a dangerous spirit and incarnate it into human form by impregnating a woman during one of his rites? The rite failed, and just a few years later this same Parsons would sign an oath stating he w as the Antichrist. This man was at the same time the author of several onceclassified government documents on explosives and patented means of rocket propulsion, and the Aerojet Corporation—which he personally founded—now produces solid-fuel rocket boosters for the Space Shuttle based on his innovations. The remarkable Parsons died at the early age of 37 in a mysterious explosion that even today is not defin-itively explained. Was it murder, suicide, or simply an accident?

I’d like to thank the follo wing people for their contributions during the pr eparation of this manuscript: Carl Abr ahamsson, Acharya (my cop y editor), Judith Bauer , Gr eg Bishop, John Bluth, P eter Breton, Stephen Emmons, Allen Greenfield, Amy Lawrence, Marjorie Malina, Roger Malina, A dam Parfrey, Dave Reimer, Peter Stenshoel, Mick Taylor, Jourrie Van Der Woude, and all the unnamed others who helped make this book the best it could be. I’d also like to thank the staff of the following organizations:

GenCorp Aerojet, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Los Angeles Public Libr ary, P asadena Centr al Libr ary, Pasadena Historical Museum, and Sherik on Space Systems.

A special thanks goes to my wonderful wife, Judy, for all her love and support throughout this entire endeavor. I couldn't have done it without her.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CERTIFICATION OF VITAL RECORD

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

P-625 W-323

PLACE OF BIRTH
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

California State Board of Health
Bureau of Vital Statistics

State Index No. 608
Local Registered No. 6549

ORIGINAL CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH
14-018214

Full Name of Child Marvel Whitside Parsons

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

SEX OF CHILD: Male
DATE OF BIRTH: Oct. 2 1914

FATHER
FULL NAME: Marvel M. Parsons
RESIDENCE: 2401 Romero St Los Angeles California
COLOR OR RACE: White
AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY: 23 (Years)
BIRTHPLACE: Illinois
OCCUPATION: Auto Salesman

MOTHER
FULL MAIDEN NAME: Ruth Whitside
RESIDENCE: (Same)
COLOR OR RACE: White
AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY: 23 (Years)
BIRTHPLACE: Illinois
OCCUPATION: Housework

Number of children born to this mother, including present birth: 2
Number of children of this mother now living: 1

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE*

I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was born alive at 8:45 P.M. on the date above stated.

(Signature) Adam Coffey
(Physician or Midwife)
Address 926 Merchants Nat'l Bldg

FILED OCT 7 1914

588770

This is to certify that this document is a true copy of the official record filed with the Office of Vital Records.
S. Kimberly Belshé, Director and State Registrar of Vital Records
by MICHAEL L. REDMOND, CHIEF, STATE REGISTRAR
DATE ISSUED

This copy not valid unless prepared on engraved border displaying seal and signature of Registrar

ANY ALTERATION OR ERASURE VOIDS THIS CERTIFICATE

one

The Early Years: 1914-1936

Marvel H. Parsons was from the Boston area, born cir ca 1894, the son of an egg mer chant. Marvel does not appear in the Boston city dir ectories for the y ears 19 10 through 1913, so he was either living at home with his parents or he was from a small town just outside of Boston. When Marvel reached the age when men have to make a living for themselves, he realized there w as no w ay he could do it selling eggs with his father . So Marvel decided to head west—to California, the land of sunshine and opportunity.

Marvel arrived in Los Angeles in 19 13, a fact kno wn because his name shows up in the 1914 city directory as residing at 2375 Scarrf, where he was a tenant. He w as employed by the English Motor Car Company of 1 132 S. Gr and A ve., which w as not an imported car dealer but named for its president, P.A. English. On a 1914 document, Marvel listed his occupation as ��? auto accessories," so he was probably employed in sales.

Parsons met Ruth Virginia Whiteside when he arrived in California and married her soon after . Ruth was from Ohio, but w as born in Chicago, Illinois, in late 1893 or early 1894. Ruth had lived in several cities around the country and had also tr aveled to Europe with her parents on different occasions. I was unable to find her in any of the Los Angeles or Pasadena city directories prior to her marriage. Marvel and Ruth Parsons gave birth to a son on October 2, 19 14 and named him Marvel Whiteside Parsons. He was their second child, the fir st having died at birth or in infanc y. The younger Marvel was born at Good Samaritan Hospital, 1225 Wilshir e Blv d., Los Angeles , California, at 8:45 p.m. The attending physician was Julian Coffey.

About this time the senior Marv el did something that w as less common in 1914 than it is toda y. It w as certainly less talk ed about then, and not condoned at all. Marv el had an affair with another woman. R uth r esponded to his affair b y doing something equally shocking: she divorced her new husband. Marvel can be found in the 1915 Los Angeles city directory, living

alone at 2401 Romeo St., listed as owner of this home, where Ruth, listed as a house wife, and their son also lived for a while.

Embittered by her ex-husband's adulterous affair, Ruth began calling the bo y "John" r ather than "Marv el," but she ne ver legally changed his name. As the boy grew, close friends and family w ould come to call him "Jack," which is how he is often remembered today. Because of these name changes , it is possible to tell at a glance whether a biographical account of Parsons originates from the scientific community or the occult community as the latter uniformly calls him "Jack." Member s of the scientific community call him "John," which is how he will be referred to throughout this book.

Curiously, Ruth Parsons kept her ex-husband's surname for herself and the boy, for she is consistently r eferred to as Mr s. Ruth Parsons for the rest of her life. It may be that there was no legal divorce at all, as one of her son' s later documents mak es reference to a "separ ation," which ma y mean that his mother ma y ha ve mer ely kick ed Marvel out.

In an ominous coincidence , Charles T aze R ussell, whose "Russellites" now call themselves the Jeho vah's Witnesses, predicted the end of the world would happen on October 2, 1914, the day of John Parsons' birth, and just a couple months after the start of World War I. When Russell announced to his congr egation in Brooklyn, New York, that the end had begun, he meant the finale was not an instantaneous end to all things, but rather the beginning of the end as outlined in the Book of Revelation—the appearance of the Antichrist and the harlot, Babylon the Gr eat, being two of the k ey events. It is ir onic that John Parsons, who would later attempt to incarnate Babylon and who would also sign an oath stating that he was the Antichrist, was born the very day of Russell's eschatological event.

Of his o wn birth, the m ystical Parsons wr ote in *Analysis By A Master of the Temple* 34 years later, "I chose this constellation [Libra] in order that you might have an innate sense of balance and ultimate justice, responsive and attractive nature, a bountiful envir onment & sense of r oyalty and lar gesse, strength, courage & po wer combined with cunning and intelligence . Saturn [time] w as bound [i.e ., the planet was at aphelion] in order that you might not easily formulate a lower will which would have satisfied and overwhelmed you with its spectacular success."

Parsons' mother, Ruth, first appears in the Pasadena city directory in 1916, sho wn as living with her par ents, Walter H. and Carrie Whiteside at 537 S. Or ange Grove Ave., where Walter is listed as homeowner. After Marvel and Ruth separated, Ruth's parents apparently made the big sacrifice and mo ved west to help car e for their daughter and grandson. Whatever occurrence or sentiment that had brought Ruth to California to begin with was evidently strong enough to make her want to stay. Rather than packing up and moving home after separating from Marvel, her home moved to her.

South Orange Grove Avenue was known locally as "Millionair e's Mile," and the family's presence here indicates Walter Whiteside was a successful man. Ruth's obituary lists Walter's occupation as president of both Ste vens Duryea and the Allis Chalmer s Manufacturing Company. Ruth and her par ents, along with y oung John, sta yed at 537 S. Orange Grove for a number of years. Ironically, John Parsons' life would end 37 y ears later just blocks fr om the very place where he grew up, at 1071 S. Orange Grove. The path he took to get ther e was a very interesting one, as we shall see.

John's father, Marvel H. Parsons, drops out of sight after 1915 and does not appear in an y of the Los Angeles or P asadena city directories again. W e do kno w that he joined the arm y, and though it is thought that he did so after World War I ended in No vember 1918, the Department of V eterans Affair s has a r ecord of a Marv el H. Parsons who enlisted in August 1917, one year before the war ended. This is the only Marv el Parsons in the VA's files. The army seems a natural refuge for a former salesman who had lost his wife , his son, and possibly his home.

John P arsons' FBI files r efer to his father as a captain (i.e ., "Captain Marvel"), and one of the ne wspaper articles written at the time of John's death refer to his father as a major . It has been said that Marvel worked for Woodrow Wilson (President, 1913-1921) or Warren G. Har ding (President, 1921-1923), but this information is unconfirmed.

Marvel may have passed away in 1922, because the 1923 Pasadena city dir ectory lists R uth P arsons as a wido w for the fir st time . However, the Marvel H. Parsons in the V A records was retired from active duty in October 1939 and didn't die until Ma y 12, 1947, although he is evidently not buried in any of the VA's national cemeteries. Rather than his ha ving passed a way

in 1923, it seems mor e likely that a man who r ose from enlistee to captain or e ven major would require an entire career to do so, and four or fiv e years just isn't enough. It may be that Ruth Parsons fibbed a little to co ver up the stigma attached to her div orce.

According to John, R uth (and perhaps her par ents) cultivated a hatred in her son for the father he never knew. In his essay *Analysis By A Master of the Temple* he wrote (in the third person), "Your father separated from your mother in order that you might grow up with a hatred of authority and a spirit of r evolution necessary to my work. The Oedipus complex was needed to formulate the love of witchcraft which would lead you into magick, with the influence of your grandfather activ e to pr event too complete an identification with y our mother."

Of his childhood he wrote, "Your isolation as a child developed the necessary background of literature and scholarship; and the unfortunate experiences with other childr en [developed] the requisite contempt for the crowd and for the group mores. You will note that these factors developed the needful hatr ed for christianity [sic] (without implanting a christian [sic] guilt sense) at an e xtremely early age."

In *The Book of AntiChrist* (written by him just prior to *Analysis By A Master of the Temple*) John Parsons alleges to have invoked Satan at age 13, cowering in fear when he appeared. This event would have occurred in late 1927 or sometime in 1928. The r eason for the invocation is not given, but it may have had to do with his problems with other children. It seems that in moments of distr ess not a fe w children have turned to magic, witchcraft or called upon "the devil."

In the dir ectory listing of 1928 the P arsons and the Whitesides show up at 1105 Glen Oaks Blvd., Pasadena, where Walter Whiteside was listed as homeo wner. Glen Oaks w as a br and ne w street that year, not listed in any of the previous city directories. There was only one other house on the str eet, which must ha ve been the start of a new housing development. Evidently Walter was doing very well at work, selling the old place and ha ving a brand new home built for himself.

Around this time, when he w as in the eighth gr ade, John made a lifelong friend when he found himself at the wr ong end of a bully' s attention. One y

oung fello w, Edw ard S. F orman, interv ened on Parsons' behalf, and the two were inseparable after that. Parsons and Forman soon learned the y shared other interests: For example, both read the works of Jules Verne, especially *From the Earth to the Moon,* and Hugo Gernsback' s ne w magazine of "scientifiction" called *Amazing Stories*.

The boys shared an interest in rockets that was more than theoretical. They loved to blow off fireworks in Parsons' backyard, and in 1928 they began to experiment with small, solid-fuel rockets. People who knew Parsons at the time said his y ard w as full of holes and burn spots fr om the constant activity . Inter estingly, F orman later stated that he and P arsons often used glue as a binder to hold together the various gunpowder mixtures they prepared for their little rockets, a fact that will be important later on.

The adult male r ole model in P arsons' life w as his gr andfather Walter, though Parsons' own writings show that Ruth was clearly the major influence in his life . It seems P arsons never knew his birth father, growing up from infancy with Walter and Carrie Whiteside in their house . John Bluth, ar chivist of NASA's Jet Pr opulsion Laboratory, has speculated that some adult must ha ve encour aged Parsons' early inter est in r ockets and fir eworks. P erhaps it w as merely a neighbor or a teacher, but it may have been his grandfather Walter.

For some reason the family moved very quickly, appearing in the Pasadena city dir ectory of 1929 at 285 N. San R afael A ve. This address was a new number on this street in this year, which leads one to assume that Walter Whiteside was taking advantage of the expansion taking place in Pasadena. For the first time the city directory lists Walter's occupation. Her e he' s sho wn to be the manager of Annandale Corporation, indicating a probable promotion.

Years later, John Parsons would tell the FBI that he toured Europe in 1929 with his "par ents," a r eference that must ha ve been to his mother and grandparents, who were the only parents he had. Such a trip would be affordable for a well-to-do man like Walter. Ruth's obituary said she tr aveled to Europe on several occasions with her parents. At least one of these trips must have included her son.

Of his teenage years, Parsons wrote in *Analysis By A Master of the Temple,*

“Early adolescence continued the development of the necessary combinations. The awakening interest in chemistry and science prepared the counterbalance for the coming magical a wakening, the means of obtaining pr estige and liv elihood in the formativ e period, and the scientific method necessary for m y manifestation. The magical fiasco at the age of 16 [193 0 or ’3 1, reference uncertain] w as needful to k eep you away from magick until y ou were sufficiently matured.”

Around the time of this m ysterious “magical fiasco” in 193 1, John’s gr andfather, Walter, passed a way. Carrie Whiteside subsequently listed her self as a wido wer in the 1932 dir ectory. John Parsons, just turning 17, had no w lost his father figur e and r ole model. Most of his adult life John sought out others to fulfill this role.

In the year after his grandfather’s death, Parsons and his boyhood friend Ed Forman devised a successful e xperiment that shows their interest in rockets was more than an amateur concern: the y heated black po wder—which inv olved no little danger—and cast it into a wax matrix. Aluminum (pr esumably aluminum o xide powder) was also added as an o xidizer. During the heat of combustion, the mixture would release oxygen, which further fueled the burn. P arsons and Forman remembered these early e xperiments later, when the y began to work on rockets as a profession.

That same y ear, 1932, P arsons took a job with the Her cules Powder Company of Pasadena, where Ed Forman may have worked as well, as certainly he did later on. In 1933 P arsons graduated from the Univ ersity School, which some ha ve confused with Univ ersity High School in West Los Angeles. The University School John Parsons attended w as a small, priv ate establishment located at 985 E. California St. in P asadena. Attendance at such a priv ate school is another indication of the Whiteside-Parsons family’s wealth.

Parsons and F orman attended Pasadena Junior College together , and though it r emains is unclear what subjects the y studied, both spent two years at the e xpensive private college, USC (University of Southern California) but neither man graduated.

As they continued to indulge their passion for pckets, Parsons and Forman corresponded with Robert Goddard and some of the Germans and Russians

working in the field. One of the Germans w as science writer Willy Le y, who later fled the Nazis to America. Le y was a member of the German Rocket Society in Berlin, as was Wernher von Braun.[14]

Parsons and F orman probably also corr esponded with Hermann Oberth, the father of German r ocketry. Oberth had been born in Transylvania and then immigr ated to German y. Ley and v on Braun owed much to him. They no doubt contacted Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, Oberth's peer in R ussia. The y ma y ha ve also contacted the Frenchman Esnault-Pelterie, though no mention is made of him in the records. Esnault-P elterie w as contempor ary with Oberth and Tsiolkovsky, and was just as well known in the field.

Forman later reminisced that they actually learned very little from the correspondence within this field, beyond the fact that nobody else had yet achieved much. Parsons and Forman eventually discontinued their letter-writing when the y realized they were being pumped for information about their own work, without the others revealing anything about what they were doing, a problem that a later associate of the Pasadena pair, Frank Malina, would also experience when he went to visit Robert Goddard.

In 1934, John, R uth, and Carrie mo ved to 62 0 St. John A ve., Pasadena, where Carrie is listed as homeo wner, even though at 2 0 years of age John must ha ve assumed the role of man of the house . John left his high school years employer Hercules Powder in 1934 to work for Halifax Explosiv es in the Moja ve Desert. Ed F orman was also employed by Halifax, though possibly at a later date.

At this time Parsons bought a used car from a local dealership. The salesman w as R obert B . R ypinski, who later w orked for Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). Rypinski liked Parsons immediately, and the two shared many interests, becoming good friends and remaining so for a number of y ears. A chance disco very at Rypinski's house a few years later would have great consequences for Parsons, but in the meantime the two enjoyed frequent weekends together, and Rypinksi later r emembered that P arsons "burned with a warm, gem-lik e flame."

In the spring of 1935, John married Helen Northrup in the Church of the Little Flo wers. The couple met at a chur ch dance. Helen was the daughter of Burton A. and Olga Northrup, and w orked as a secretary at her father's

business, Northrup Business Adjustments. John and Helen bought themselv es a home at 168 S. T errace Driv e, Pasadena, while Carrie Whiteside bought a new house for herself and Ruth Parsons at 723 Lincoln, possibly a smaller house just big enough for two widows.

In his memoirs Parsons cryptically referred to a “loss of family fortune” around this time, perhaps in connection with his gr andfather’s death. He wr ote, “The early marriage to Helen serv ed to break your family ties and effect a transference to her, away from a dangerous attachment to y our mother. The e xperience at Halifax and Cal T ech serv ed to str engthen y our self r eliance, scientific method and material powers. The influence of Tom Rose [reference uncertain] at this period, as that of Ed F orman in adolescence, was essential in de veloping the male center .” P arsons also r efers to “. . . Music , Lynn, Curtis , and Gloria, and the incr easing restlessness.” P arsons’ lo ve for classical music w as gr eat—as w as his mother’s—but the r eferences to Lynn, Curtis , and Gloria, obvious early influences, remain uncertain.

Something else happened that autumn, something that would cure the r estlessness and change the dir ection of P arsons’ life for ever. After seeing an article in the *Pasadena Evening Post* about a lecture given at the California Institute of Technology (Cal Tech or Caltech), Parsons and pal Ed F orman went to campus to talk to the speak er. The topic was the rocket experiments of the Austrian Eugen Sänger, and the lecture had been given by a graduate student named William Bollay, which is still on file in the JPL archives. Though the speech was written in 1935, it appear s to ha ve been pr esented se veral times—perhaps as late as 1939. It concludes with speculation on the possibility of “stratospheric passenger carriers,” i.e., “spaceships.”

NASA’s Jet Pr opulsion Labor atory began in the 192 0s and w as known as the Guggenheim A eronautical Labor atory, California Institute of Technology (GALCIT). GALCIT started as an aerodynamics research laboratory funded by a member of the famous Guggenheim family and administered by Caltech. In 1926, GALCIT came under the direction of the w ell-known Hungarian pr ofessor Theodor e v on Kármán (1881-1963).

Born in Budapest on Ma y 11, 1881, v on Kármán w as descended from Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel of Prague, and he often boasted of his ancestor’s reputation for having created a golem, “an artificial human being

in Hebrew folklore endowed with life ." [15] Unmentioned in his autobiogr aphy, *The Wind and Beyond* , the golem appear s in several secondary sources. Though not relevant to our discussion of GALCIT, the cr eation of the golem is a topic w e will r eturn to later when we discuss "magical children."

After graduating Göttingen Univ ersity in German y, v on Kármán was awarded a fellowship there, and began to conduct r esearch on aerodynamic drag in one of Eur ope's first wind tunnels , which he built for this purpose . He later mo ved to the position of Chair of Aeronautics at the T echnische Hochschule in Aachen, German y, where GALCIT's Clark Millikan found him in 1926. Clark Millikan was the son of Caltech president Robert Millikan and the head of the GALCIT lab when he recruited von Kármán away from Aachen.

Von Kármán's specialty was the new, wide-open field of aeronautics, and he eventually influenced a number of students who went on to great things in their o wn right. One of his pupils w as a graduate student named Frank J. Malina, who was born October 2, 1912 in the small to wn of Br enham, T exas, northw est of Houston. In 1934, Malina earned a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Texas A&M in nearby College Station and was working toward his Ph.D. at Caltech when Parsons and Forman presented themselves to William Bollay at the latter's lecture on Eugen Sänger's rocket experiments. For Malina, von Kármán became a father figur e, much like the one Parsons was still seeking.

Although the older man did not actualize his father fixation, when Parsons was with v on Kármán, he kne w was in the pr esence of a great man. In turn, v on Kármán called P arsons "a delightful scr ewball" who "loved to recite pagan poetry to the sky while stamping his feet"—a r eference to Aleister Cr owley's "Hymn to P an," which Parsons loved to recite. At a party at the big house at 1003 S. Orange Grove Ave. where he would eventually live, Parsons stood in a balcony above the gathering and r ecited the Hymn fr om memory after being prompted by Andrew Haley, v on Kármán's attorney. A erojet employee Fritz Zwicky r elated that P arsons invoked P an, the wild, horned god of fertility, before each rocket test. Parsons was probably not the only one pr esent at such danger ous tests who said a pr ayer. His heter odoxy

notwithstanding, v on Kármán wr ote in 1958 that Parsons was the third most important person in the development of rocketry in the United States—behind only himself and Frank Malina. Von Kármán praised Parsons' "rich talent for chemistry" and perhaps induced by Parsons' beliefs, von Kármán found it necessary to say he read John Symonds' *The Great Beast*, an early, somewhat sensationalistic biography of Aleister Crowley, the infamous "black magician" who exerted so much influence over Parsons.

After appearing at Bollay's lecture on Sänger, Parsons and Forman used the opportunity to ask Bolla y about working at Caltech, where they could get the necessary funds for their e xperiments with r ockets. Though unable to dir ectly help P arsons and F orman, Bolla y directed them to F rank Malina. Although P arsons and Forman held no degrees, Malina was able to spot their useful qualities right away. Forman was the expert mechanic while Parsons knew powder explosives backward and forward, even developing the practice of visiting industrial accidents to determine cause of e xplosions. The two men revealed their love of rocketry and developing ways of making them work. People remember Parsons as the theor etician and Forman as the mechanic, perfectly complementing one another . The pair w ere an inseparable team and an inv aluable component for Malina, who later wr ote that P arsons "lack ed the discipline of formal tr aining, [but] had an uninhibited fruitful imagination." The lack of discipline and uninhibited fruitful imagination w ould naturally spill o ver into other areas of Parsons' life.

Inspired by Parsons' and Forman's support, Malina prepared a dissertation on r ocket propulsion. Targeting Clark Millik an to sponsor his doctorate, Millikan refused, an act that Malina resented from then on. Malina took his pr oject down the Caltech hall to v on Kármán, who immediately appr oved of it and pr ovided his support. V on Kármán was well known for considering what other s thought to be too kooky; after all, rockets were still viewed as science fiction by the public. The mer e mention of r ockets had people thinking of such impossible things as trips to the moon and r arely anything else. Von Kármán's allo wed P arsons and F orman to use the lab at GALCIT despite their lack of affiliation with the school.

Malina later wr ote of being influenced b y reading Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* at the age of 12, as had P arsons and Forman. (Malina

actually read it in Czech, when he lived in that country with his parents for a few years.) All three enjoyed the excitement of trial-and-error experimentation, though Malina also understood the importance of theor etical w ork, upon which v on Kármán alw ays insisted. Since P arsons and F orman were anxious to test r ockets to prove brash theories, Malina best served his role by inducing them to work out their theoretical work. When experiments seemed to reach a dead end, Parsons would go to v on Kármán, who'd perform a fe w quick calculations and say something like, "Yes, John, it is possible to achieve success in the dir ection you are heading, but fir st you must work out se veral dependant v ariables in the field." Fieldw ork w as Parsons' specialty; and for this v ery reason one is tempted to think von Kármán should ha ve found him mor e important than Malina in his 1958 list of the most important people in aer ospace.

Malina corresponded heavily with his par ents in Texas when he was de veloping r ocketry with Parsons, F orman and v on Kármán. Significant portions of these letter s are preserved in the JPL archives under the file, "Excerpts from Letters Written Home." Taken together with the memoirs Malina later wrote, these missives provide valuable insight and a complete picture into the early development of rockets in the United States.

The first mention of P arsons and Forman in Malina's documents comes on February 14, 1936. By March 30, Malina referred to the pair and himself as the "gr oup." After r eviewing the scant liter ature on the subject of rockets, the group decided that their first goal would be to develop a working motor. Stationary tests of motor s, rather than launching test r ockets, w as the fir st priority . Other e xperimenters bypassed this important step, failing as a r esult. Von Kármán persuaded GALCIT to lease three acres of land from the city of P asadena in the area known as the Arroyo Seco, which exists in the shadow of the San Gabriel Mountains , just above the dam called De vil's Gate. The acr eage w as the site of the ne w gr oup's e xperiments. Today, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory is situated there.

The great experiment started slowly. Malina writes on April 5 that Parsons and F orman take jobs at a po wder company. Presumably they returned to Halifax. Ev en though r ockets were their passion, there was no mone y in it —y et. On April 13, Malina wr ote that he hadn't seen either of them for at least se veral days; Parsons finally phoned Malina on Ma y 24, telling him

that he almost had a r ocket motor completed.

A month later, on June 18, Malina writes of P arsons testing with powder, a reference to a solid fuel called “ballistite ,” which is made by inserting a compressed black powder into the r ocket motor so it will burn more slowly and evenly. The compression is accomplished by heating smokeless powder at fir st, then extruding it under pr essure into long thin rods. Smokeless powder is a “double-base propellant” consisting of nitroglycerine and nitrocellulose, a formula known since the time of Alfr ed Nobel, the inv entor of dynamite. This pr opellant was the fuel that e ventually powered bazook a rockets and was not much different from the wax and aluminum used by Parsons and Forman in 1932. Ballistite w as used in some of their tests prior to their work with GALCIT.

The work took off r apidly once the testing started. On June 29, Malina wrote, “Parsons and I drove all over Los Angeles—looking for high pressure tanks and meter s. Didn’t ha ve any luck. Two instruments we need costs $60 a piece and we are trying to find them second hand. I am convinced it is a hopeless task. Will have to approach Kármán.” The group’s lack of funds reflects that GALCIT wasn’t anxious to bankr oll a pr oject the y felt w as far-fetched. Malina approached Professor Irving P. Krick, who made a lot of money forecasting weather for movie studios. Though intrigued by the possibilities, Krick did not contribute . Parsons, F orman, and Malina w ere required to fund the project on their own.

On July 18, Malina wr ote, “The early part of this w eek Jack Parsons and I covered much of Los Angeles looking for equipment. Our next lead points to Long Beach. P arsons is planning to start manufacturing explosives with another fello w [Forman]. Up to the present time he has been w orking for an explosives concern. Hope they make a go of it. I have found in Parsons and his wife [Helen] a pair of good intelligent friends.” “Hope they make a go of it” almost sounds defeatist, but Malina persisted.

In the summer of 1936, Malina took the tr ouble to visit R obert Goddard (1882-1945) in R oswell, Ne w Me xico. Goddar d left Connecticut for Roswell years earlier to work on his own rocket project, about which he was very secretive. Goddard actually worked in Pasadena for a while during World War I, in the v ery Arroyo Seco where Parsons, Malina, and F orman

were laboring. Malina visited Goddard to get ideas for his own research and to perhaps find a new position working for Goddard—who had funding—rather than at the cheap domain of Caltech.

At the invitation of Harry Guggenheim and v on Kármán, who were interested in recruiting him, Goddard visited Caltech. Unwilling to lea ve R oswell, Goddar d r equested that Caltech send Malina to Roswell to visit his facility, which Malina did in September.

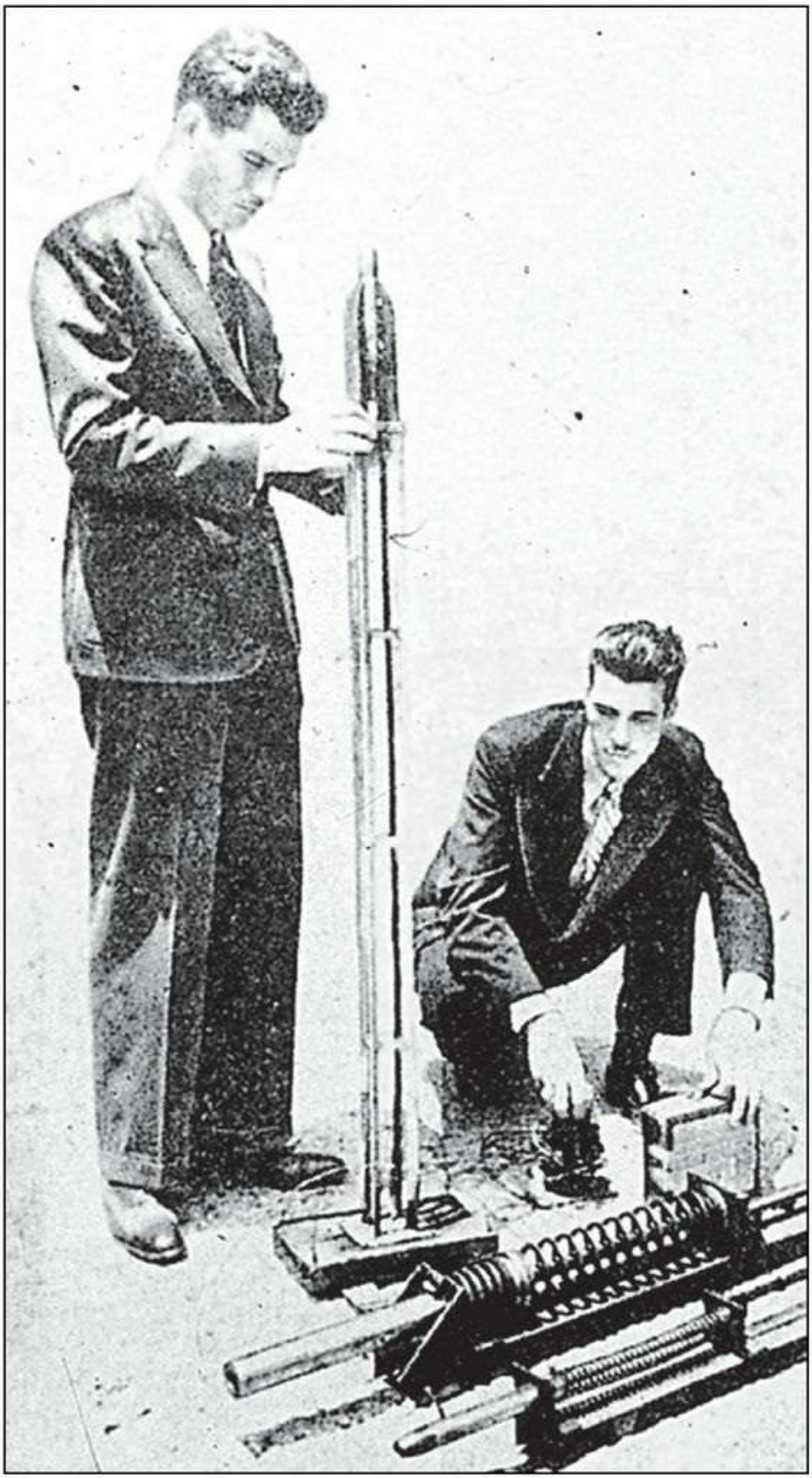
During Malina's visit, Goddard was polite on the surface, but displayed obvious tension. As Goddar d sho wed him ar ound, Malina realized his host didn't sho w anything of v alue. Malina kne w right away that Goddard wanted another hand to do the har d work rather than a co-r esearcher. Malina r eturned to California disappointed. Goddard later refused a position at Caltech offered by Clark Millikan, probably understanding he would just be another scientist on a large campus, rather than the head of his o wn program. In his memoir s, von Kármán made some rather negative comments about Goddard's research suffering from self-imposed isolation.

Back at Caltech, "the gr oup" was joined b y three others: Apollo M.O. Smith (called " Amo" b y his friends), Carlos C. Wood, and Rudolph Schott, bringing the total to six. Smith was a Caltech student like Malina, and r egarded an eccentric since he constantly w ore a pith helmet he modified by placing a small cooling fan on top. Wood and Schott were just a couple of guys from town who walked out to the test site and offer ed their assistance . Schott's red pickup truck became the gr oup's standard means of tr ansporting test appar atus. There was also associated with the gr oup for a while an individual named Rockefeller ("Rocky"), but little mention of him e xists in the records. Someone operated a motion picture camera during some of the tests; Rocky may well have been the camera operator.

In September , 1936, Malina got a ne w r oommate: Martin Summerfield (1916-1996), a gr aduate student inter ested in r ockets who arriv ed at Caltech fr om Br ooklyn College in Ne w York. Summerfield went on and made great advances in the field of liquid propellants; the Summerfield Burning R ate Law is named after him. Summerfield became fast friends with Malina, as the tw o had many things in common that Malina did not shar e with P arsons. Both Summerfield and Malina were graduate students, well-

versed in theory, while P arsons held no degr ee and w as entir ely self-tr ained. A week after Summerfield mo ved in, Malina learned that he shar ed birthdays with Parsons, one of the last disco veries they would enjoy together as friends.

Parsons at left, and Ed For man.



two

Parsons at Caltech: 1936-1939

Halloween of 1936 pr oduced the event which JPL still refers to as its birth. F rom Malina's letters, one gets the impr ession that this important date meant little e xcept another series of tests ending in failure. Even if the day signified failure to F rank Malina, a photogr apher w as pr esent to get shots of Rudolph Schott, Amo Smith, Malina, Ed F orman, and John P arsons posing with testing apparatus. Though the photo is referred to by JPL staff as "the Nativity Scene ," Carlos Wood, one of the r esearchers, failed to attend the apparently momentous gathering.

Once a y ear, on JPL's Open House for the public , the Nativity Scene is r ecreated with mannequins just behind the JPL Visitors' Center. For the 50th anniversary in 1986, JPL contemplated hiring live actors to portr ay the fiv e founder s. This e vent never materialized, but the P arsons mannequin and four other s are stored at JPL today, stored for the ne xt Open House when the y'll be put on display. It seems ir onic that this Nativity Scene took place on Halloween in 1936, containing the likeness of a man who signed an oath stating he w as "the Antichrist." Photogr aphs of the original scene and the JPL recreation are reproduced in the photo section of this volume. (It should be pointed out that the Nativity Scene celebrates the test of liquid fuel, though the gr oup worked with both solid and liquid fuel at this time .)

The day after the Nativity Scene, an incident occurred that Malina thought significant to r eport: One of the fuel hoses pulled fr ee, and the fuel spilling out the end ignited. The hose started twisting and turning, a flaming serpent fr om which the y all r an for their liv es. After they composed themselv es, the gr oup regretted not capturing the moment on film. Later tests fared somewhat better, but the group still measur ed success in ho w man y *seconds* the r ocket fir ed. By January 16, 1937, they were up to 44 seconds.

The test apparatus at Arr oyo Seco was built with borrowed tanks and hoses, F orman later r ecalled. He machined the casing for the chamber

himself and stated, “It w as a hand-to-mouth oper ation where y ou r ented machine time for $2 an hour and did the w ork yourself, in a day when wages were 25 cents an hour.” That’s half a day’s wages for one hour of shop time. Forman’s skill in this precise field is what gave him his excellent reputation as a mechanic. He continued to head the GALCIT/JPL mechanics department for as long as he stayed with the group.

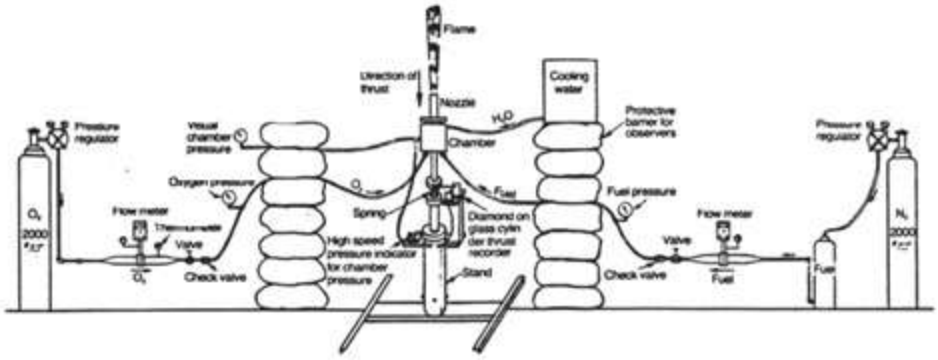
The original schematic for the Nativity Scene test, is dr awn on tracing paper by Malina, who signed both his and Parsons’ names at the bottom. The schematics show oxygen flowing from one side, with methyl alcohol (the fuel) and nitr ogen flowing from the other side . Water cooled the r ocket during the burn. Thrust pushed do wn a spring that measured force. The deflection of the spring measured the force applied to it. A small diamond tip on the apparatus scratched a glass plate to mark the furthest point of deflection. The r ocket and mount were protected by sandbags, with the tanks (and the e xperimenters) well away from it.

Five pages of Parsons’ handwritten notes, which cover the period November 15, 1936 to January 17, 1937, begin:

The research is conducted with the view of acertaing [sic] the aplication [sic] of the rocket to altitude exploration and other fields, the properties of various fuels and of metals at high temperatur es. Rockets to be investigated ar e solid fuel r ockets, utilizing explosives or combustibles and liquid r ockets employing liquid explosives or liquid or gaseous oxygen and various combustibles.

Different motors and materials will be tried together with various methods of fuel injection. Relevant previous data will be compiled, together with records of all tests + calculations.

Schematic diagram of test setup for GALCIT rocket research drawn by Frank Malina in August, 1936.



Data from the fir st test—the actual Nativity Scene—ar e missing. The second test on November 15 employed methyl alcohol at various pressures as a fuel, ignited by a remote battery. All three trials on that second test day ended in failure. In his notes, Parsons remarked that he should switch from rubber tubing to copper tubing to prevent the tubing from burning up during future tests.

A third test, on November 28, yielded four burns of v arious duration, the best of which w as 2 0 seconds. Parsons' notes outline the various materials used in these tests , as w ell as their pr ocurement sources, as w ell as a r ecord of the test tak en January 16, 1937. Obviously these field notes are incomplete. The long periods of time between each test are due to von Kármán's insistence that the group analyze each burn before they start another.

While w aiting, Parsons and F orman launched their o wn powder rockets. Malina wrote, "[T]heir attitude is symptomatic of the anxiety of pioneer s of ne w technological de velopments. In or der to obtain support for their dr eams, the y ar e under pr essure to demonstr ate them before they can be technically accomplished."

Parsons is mentioned in Malina' s letters a couple of times during this period and the months follo wing. For the record, Malina wrote on November 21, 1936 that P arsons had the flu the pr evious week. Though the first successful test of a solid-fuel rocket motor took place in January 1937, Malina didn't think much of it at the time , as it is not even mentioned.

The gr oup left the *arroyo* next April and mo ved on-campus at Caltech, located right in P asadena, where they worked out of one of the GALCIT lab buildings. Only v on Kármán w ould have been daring enough to let these

unsophisticated r esearchers work on-campus. In May, Hsue-shen T sien, who had come fr om China on a scholar ship funded by Boxer Rebellion reparations, began working with the group, sharing an office with Amo Smith. W eld Arnold, a meteor ology student, contributed b y presenting the gr oup with $1000 in small bills wrapped in a ne wspaper. No one dar ed ask wher e he got them. A small fund w as opened at Caltech, and the mone y deposited. Curiously, at the end of the war there was still $300 left in the account. Arnold became the group's unofficial photographer for a while, riding his bicycle at least 20 miles from Los Angeles every day.

Campus residents soon resented the group's presence. Testing was loud and violent. Immediately after their arriv al on campus , the group met with their fir st disaster. In the lab the y had mounted a rocket motor to a 50-foot pendulum. They measured the swing of the pendulum to calculate the thrust pr oduced. The fir st motor tested exploded, filling the building with a cloud of meth yl alcohol and nitrogen dioxide. A thin layer of rust formed on many pieces of valuable equipment thr oughout the lab . The other campus r esidents started referring to the group as "the Suicide Squad." Parsons would remember this e vent four y ears later, when he finally figur ed out a way to put the volatility of red fuming nitric acid (RFNA) to good use.

Von Kármán moved the group outside, adjacent to the lab, and had them rebuild the pendulum, this time making it fiv e times stronger than thought necessary. Two years later the pendulum was destroyed again during an explosion, when a piece of steel was hurled into the wall wher e Malina had been standing just minutes earlier . Fortunately, he had been called a way by von Kármán's secretary on some mundane matter concerning a typewriter. After this dangerous incident, back to the *arroyo* the group went.

On March 22 there is another brief mention of Parsons in Malina's letters, and on April 24 Malina r elated that Parsons was writing a paper "on the chemistry end of it." This paper w as entitled " A Consideration of the Pr acticality of Various Substances as F uels for Jet Propulsion." The finished paper is dated June 19, 1937, and is signed "J. Parsons, Halifax Explosives Company." Despite its origin, it was later classified by the government but has long been declassified and is on file at the JPL archives, the only paper in the archives bearing Parsons' name as the sole author. He was co-author on several other papers, but this one was his alone.

The paper begins:

In considering the practicality of various fuels and oxidizers for rockets, certain criteria apply which ar e not met with in or dinary internal combustion motor problems.

Since rocket performance is influenced by the ratio of fuel weight to total weight, and since the r ocket must car ry all the oxidizer necessary for combustion, the ratio of total weight of fuel and oxidizer to the available ener gy is of utmost importance. Since mass per unit flow is also impor tant, a high specific gravity is preferred.

In addition, ordinary considerations of safety , availability, cost and convenient physical state should not be neglected.

Parsons w as sa ying that the fuel must be dense to pack a r eal punch, and be powerful enough to lift its o wn weight as well as that of the rocket and the cargo it may be carrying. This seemingly obvious statement is one that ne vertheless must be made at the start of analysis. In the paper , Parsons presents five tables of v arious fuels with some algebraic calculations and chemical equations determining various pr operties of each. These calculations mak e it clear that Parsons was no amateur r ocket hobbyist. He w as, as everyone said, the theoretician of the group, even if he was an impatient theoretician. Parsons had obvious mathematical and scientific kno wledge to back up his assertions . Malina specialized in differ ential calculus, which does not appear in the work of Parsons.

Parsons' first table looks at the explosive gases acetylene, butane, butyne, hydrogen, and methane. He dismisses acetylene as inherently dangerous, without carrying out the calculations of combustive properties. He further mentions potential pr oblems with h ydrogen and methane. Liquid o xygen is not e ven in the table , as P arsons eliminates it from calculations altogether as being too dangerous. He was right about this for decades . Only when the safe handling of liquid oxygen was finally perfected did it r eplace the liquid fuel combinations that Parsons himself would help perfect.

Table II contains the liquid h ydrocarbons methyl alcohol, eth yl alcohol, pr opargyl, benzol, eth yl ether, and heptane . All had gr eat availability, were cheap and easy to handle, but all had a low energy content.

Table III contains self-combustibles (explosives) such as gunpo w-der, etc., the energy content of which was low compared to gases and liquids, and which were difficult to handle. With a few precautions, Parsons added, the y might be r endered useful. P arsons even mentioned that the y might be “moulded or pr essed into sticks ,” which was the seed of an idea that w ould later lead to success.

Table IV addresses metal or ganics and hybrids. Little was known about them, Parsons said, and the y were costly to handle and difficult to prepare. One of them, trimeth yl aluminum, is spontaneously inflammable in air . P arsons belie ved the y w ere w orthy of further investigation, though nothing seems to have come of it.

Table V is labeled “Various Elements” and contains figures for aluminum, boron, carbon, lithium, and magnesium. P arsons thought they may have some value when blended with other substances, for which aluminum w as already being used in the field of e xplosives. Parsons further thought the energy obtained from such blends could be used indirectly to heat another substance, such as water.

There is also a sixth table, which lists not fuels but oxidizers, substances intr oduced into a chemical pr ocess to speed combustion. Much experimentation remained to be done with o xidizers, Parsons concluded. The 13-page paper contains six appendices sho wing values for differ ent materials obtained thr ough actual e xperimentation by Parsons and others. These appendices represent the real-world follow-up to the theoretical calculations showed in the fir st part of the report. The appendices reflects not only the up-front calculations but also actual tests of fuel mixtur es at Halifax. Documenting each step represents a lengthy but necessary pr ocess. No definite conclusions were reached, but Parsons always saw in each experiment the beginning of another. Each test led to ne w ideas for him, and he ne ver stopped thinking.

The GALCIT Rocket Research Project - Plans and Program for Research at Cal. Tech. Dry Fuel Expeziences-hat can be done with powder rockets? The Rocketor’s Workshop—Parachutes, valves.

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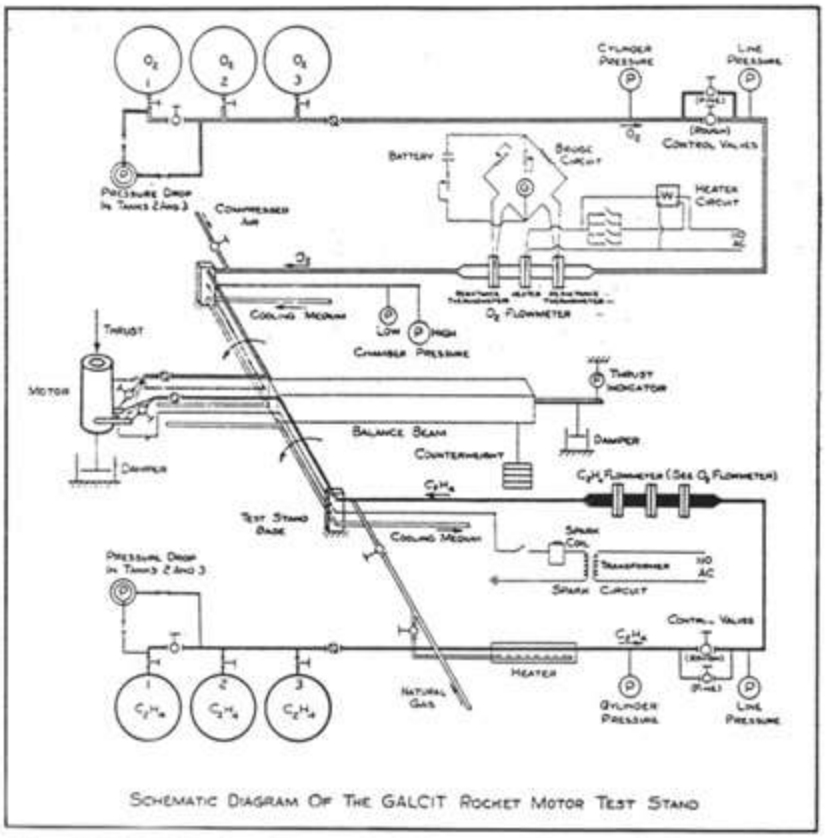


SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF THE GALCIT ROCKET MOTOR TEST STAND

The GALCIT Rocket Research Project — Plans and Program for Research at Cal. Tech. **Dry Fuel Experiences**—What can be done with powder rockets? **The Rocketor's Workshop**—Parachutes, valves.

The cover of *Astronautics* uses a schematic diagram of Parsons', Forman's and Malina's GALCIT liquid fuel research set-up.

Malina credits Parsons' paper with the development of red fuming nitric acid as a storable oxidizer. He also pointed out that Parsons first anticipated the use of bor on hydride as a fuel in this paper , putting him ahead of his time. The key, as von Kármán said, was to make the fuel burn slowly. In armaments applications the fuel w as burned as quickly as possible . Parsons

and F orman had to unlearn this technique and find a new one.

When the term ended the next month, Malina paid Parsons a visit. On May 22—befor e the paper w as actually finished, Malina wr ote, “Antelope Valley, near Ne w Hall—This w eekend I accepted an invitation of Jack Parsons to spend at the house he has r ented near the powder company for which he w orks. Jack’ s wife [Helen] is her e which ensures good meals. We are about 40 miles from Pasadena in the foothills.”

Antelope Valley is the curr ent site of Edw ards Air F orce Base—a large valley—and it is uncertain if the po wder company Halifax, for which Parsons labored, was anywhere near the base. Several explosives companies came from Antelope Valley, all conveniently remote from the city. John and Helen Parsons must not have lived there very long, for the P asadena city dir ectories show them living at 168 S. Terrace Drive from 1937 to 1940. Perhaps they retained the house at S. Terrace, which they owned, and rented the house intermittently in Antelope Valley until Parsons finished his paper in June.

While writing the paper, Parsons commuted back to P asadena to do additional testing with GALCIT. That group achieved its best results yet in May, running a motor for longer than a minute . However, the graduate students finished their term and summer arrived and drifted away. Malina and Tsien focused on doctorate programs. Weld went to New York. Those who stayed behind collected their papers on rocketry into what the y called “the Bible ,” copies of which e xist in the JPL archives. Parsons’ paper was among the half-dozen or so in the volume.

Around this time , P arsons and Malina started to write “ a no vel with an anti-w ar plot” that w as also supposed to serv e as a mo vie treatment. The manuscript is fr amed in anti-capitalist beliefs , with Malina documenting his own struggles with corporate culture and the coming w ar in Eur ope. Some writer s have claimed the manuscript was some sort of sci-fi story about a flight to the moon, or about evil rocket scientists. This is not the case.

The original script is in the possession of Marjorie Malina, Frank’s widow. It is untitled and bear s no author’ s name, and is entir ely in Malina’s handwriting. Malina’ s memoir s make it clear that P arsons was a collabor ator and that Malina w orked on the manuscript at Parsons’ house. Indeed,

Malina expressed being nervous about being around the tetr anitromethane in P arsons' kitchen—a chemical that Parsons was collecting though the army decided it was too dangerous to use due to its connection to se veral deaths. Because of its r arity, Parsons was stockpiling the stuff rather than disposing of it, and also had enough gunpo wder hoar ded "to blo w up a city block"—this according to Ed Forman's first wife, who probably was not exaggerating. The gunpowder was in an open barrel on the back porch. After Parsons' death, Malina wr ote that "Parsons' familiarity with e xplosives led to contempt."

The 38-page handwritten synopsis of the script is full of cr ossed-out passages and other editing marks , indicating that the tw o men brainstormed together as Malina set it all to paper. The story is about a group of rocket scientists—obviously based on themselves and their associates at Caltech—who are struggling to carry out pur e research while other factions have more selfish aims for their work—anti-capitalist at almost every turn. The character based on Forman is a union organizer. The intellectual characters (and even their mechanics) are all philosophical heavies. The "bad guys" are all big industrial types and those who cater to them. The story is full of side stories inv olving love interests and the like. It is also eerily prophetic.

The character based on Parsons is named "Theophile Belvedere," whose description sho ws insight (and possibly a little humor) on Parsons' part. Belvedere is "a mystic who speaks for religion and the organized church." He is "extremely fanatical and is to used to add a sinister effect to the plot." His description is worth quoting verbatim, but it should be k ept in mind that the manuscript w as an obvious first draft never taken beyond this stage.

Theophile Belvedere is a tall slightly stooped, r osy cheeked man with a face whose lines continuously change fr om those of joy to those of miser y. Shor tly befor e the stor y opens he has been defrocked from the Franciscan or der upon his own suggestion. In the monaster y he has pursued a study of astr onomy, a subject also of interest to the abbot. A small telescope had been built at the cor ner of the monaster y enclosur e wher e Belveder e spent many nights gazing at the stars. The monastery is located on a hill overlooking a small town of Spanish atmospher e. Once each year a fiesta is held in the town and for many years the monks have watched thr ough niches in the enclosur e the parade that took place on the closing night. On this night

Belveder e, as usual, entered the space between the obser vatory and the corner of the enclosure. He is suddenly surprised by a young woman in pajamas who in her disarray clutches his arm. The next day Belvedere goes to the abbot and confesses his temptation and decides that he will leave the order. He learns that the young woman is the daughter of the abbot's br other who has been visiting the monaster y. Belvedere returns to Rock [Pasadena] wher e he finds his fanatically religious mother being abused by her dr unken husband. The family is on r elief. Belvedere, having an M.S. degr ee in science, applies for a public school teaching position in the Rock High School. He is accepted and becomes a teacher of general science.

Near the end of the story, Belvedere accidentally blows himself up trying to stop one of his e xperiments—it should be noted that this story was written 15 years before Parsons died the same way, an eerie prophecy. F urther, the char acter based on T sien gets sent back to China under suspicion of communism and dr ops out of touch with the others, an incident that also later occurr ed. Many of those who remain are investigated for their anti-capitalistic political beliefs, and Malina's greatest fear—that their w ork would be used for w artime applications—also came true . In the story it is a rich inv estor who actually sells their secrets to the Nazis and Fascists.

Included with the manuscript is another movie treatment, some of which is typed on MGM letterhead. F urther handwritten technical descriptions (and illustrations) were composed in Malina's hand. The typed portion is dated June 17, 1937 and entitled "Shado w of the Wing," bearing Malina's name as author. The treatment appears to be a different movie project entirely, one that an "M. Balcon" at MGM was evidently considering. "Shado w of the Wing" is the story of a mock bomber mission from Australia to London that goes awry. The hero is the pilot, who lands the plane despite all odds . Both stories never w ent be yond a pr eliminary stage, the fir st due to a sudden influx of funding for the r ocket pr oject, the second for r easons unknown. Lack of interest on MGM's part, perhaps?

On July 4, 1937, Malina wrote, "For our 'fourth,' Parsons and I are going to make some tests with a powder rocket motor," which sounds like a suitable way to celebrate both the Fourth of July and the completion of Parsons' paper

just a few days earlier. On the 26th Malina wrote, “Parsons and I y esterday discussed the possibility of seeing Goddard again. Perhaps he and wife and I would drive to Roswell in his car, he to r eturn while I go on to T exas . . .” The y did not make the trip. The wording suggests that Parsons had visited Goddard previously, but such a trip is not r ecorded elsewhere.

As the months proceeded, Malina focused on his doctor al thesis, which he had been postponing for some time . Work on the thesis moved him closer to Summerfield and further fr om Parsons. Malina next refers to the rocket project a full five months later, on December 18. “Parsons wants to mak e some tests this w eekend” was all that Malina wr ote, causing one to w onder wh y he e ven mentioned it. Later that December Malina lectur ed the local Sigma Xi chapter on “Facts and Fancies of Rockets.” And the group made the newspapers on January 26, 1938, when Malina and Smith tr aveled to New York to present a paper to the Institute of A eronautical Sciences. Clark Millikan had convinced the school to put up $2 00 for the trip—Caltech’s fir st dir ect financial support of the pr oject. That da y in January, articles appear ed in the *New York Times* and the *Houston Chronicle*, as w ell as in the *Los Angeles Times* , *New York Her aldTribune* , and *Time* magazine.

The story begins, “A scheme for shooting an exploratory rocket to a height of 967 miles abo ve the earth w as unfolded today before a convention of aer onautical engineer s.” Malina and Smith told the convention “the idea works in theory . . . whether it will work in fact depends on the efficiency of the rocket.” They proposed a three-stage rocket with a maximum velocity of 11,000 miles per hour. As a result of the publicity , a Ne w York stuntman w anted to ride a r ocket up 1000 feet and par achute down at county fair s, and one Hollyw ood radio station wanted to broadcast the sound of a rocket motor firing.

On February 2, 1938, the Caltech student paper *California Tech* printed an article on rockets written by Malina with the help of Smith and Tsien. In April of 1938, the Associated Pr ess released an item about the group’s work that is worth quoting verbatim, as it is contains valuable information unrecorded in Malina’s letters. It reads:

Frank J. Molina [sic] and thr ee student-scientists [pr obably Parsons, Forman, and Smith] ar e working on a motor fr om which they hope to

develop another which will take a r ocket nearly 100 miles above the earth's surface.

They see it car rying instr uments to obtain data useful in weather forecasting, records on cosmic radiation, facts valuable to astronomers and information for other scientific purposes.

This motor, set up at the Guggenheim School of Aer onautics, California Institute of Technology, is a combustion chamber which mixes and bur ns gaseous oxygen and ethelene [sic] at 5000 degrees Fahrenheit, a temperature about half that of the sun [!].

The flaming gas comes out of the "exhaust" at a speed of around 9000 feet a second. With a "step r ocket," one with three motors, two of which would be r eleased in flight, a speed of 11,000 feet a second might be reached, Molina said.

"After experiments with gases, we will next tr y liquids," said Molina, "for that is what the rocket will have to use. We can allow only seven-tenths of the total weight of the r ocket for propellants.

"The design of the r ocket will be highly impor tant because of the difficulty in keeping one in a straight course. Experiments have shown rockets may be deflected in a change in air currents. A gyroscope may help meet this dif ficulty.

"Our aim is to devise a r ocket which will carry scientific instruments to heights of about 500,000 feet, far above those r eached by sounding balloons. The record for a sounding balloon, I believe, is 110,000 feet. We are working everything out by theory, so far as is possible."

Molina said the decr ease with altitude in the ear th's gravitational pull will be a favorable factor in building r ockets to r each even greater heights. His r eckoning is that this pull is one-tenth less 200 miles up than at the ear th's sur face, and that it decreases proportionately with altitude.

Soon after, Malina and the gr oup abandoned step r ockets altogether. The AP item spawned several more newspaper articles about the group's work, but Malina lamented all the fuss, as is evidenced by the conspicuous absence of rocket travel from the above quote. (The public still identified rockets with trips to the moon.) Malina did not appear in subsequent ne wspaper articles,

but P arsons and F orman readily did, and were photographed repeatedly. They clearly saw this exposure as a way to gain attention—and perhaps some funding.

Parsons also seemed to enjo y the status his w ork br ought and sometimes exaggerated his title when pr esenting himself to other s. He w ould call himself “Engineer ,” a false title since he held no degree, though he actually had a more practical knowledge of explosives than man y engineers who did ha ve degrees. The occupations listed for Parsons in the Pasadena city directories simply came from whatever the homeowner told the compiler of the directories. Parsons started out calling himself a “chemist,” and later on calling himself a “research assistant” at Caltech. A letter of recommendation he wrote for R obert Dr oz bear s the signatur e block, “Pr oject Engineer , Aeronautics Department.” T wo GALCIT organizational charts in the JPL archives do make one thing clear: P arsons was the sole individual in charge of the solid fuel program.

May 1938 found P arsons in the courtr oom, named by Caltech as their best e xplosives expert when the pr osecutor of a mur der trial contacted the institute . The case for which he serv ed as an e xpert witness was a mur der by car bomb. The trial lasted months and is well-documented in the *Los Angeles Evening Her ald and Express*. Parsons is mentioned in articles on Ma y 6 and Ma y 10, the latter of which has a photo of him.

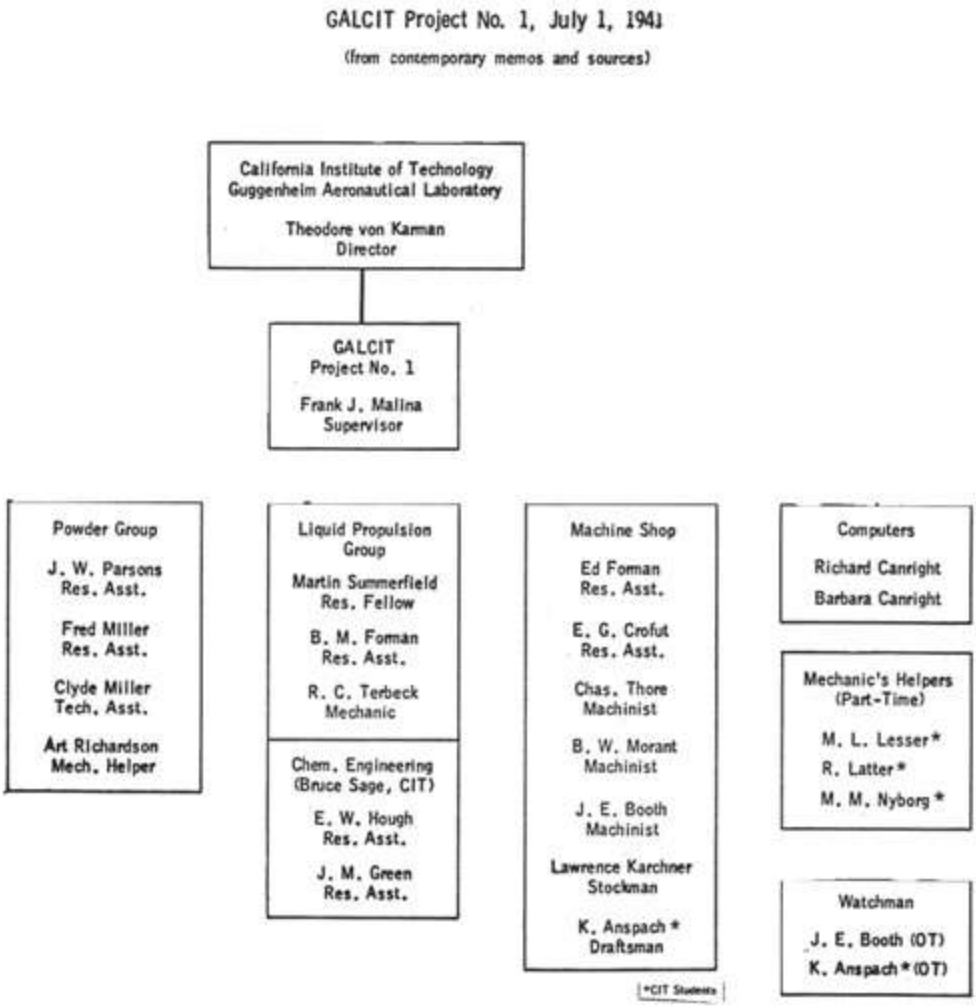
The defendants in the case were Captain Earle E. Kynette and his two aides, Lieutenants Roy Allen and Fred Browne of the Los Angeles city police’s “spy squad” who were accused of planting a pipe bomb in the car of another officer , Harry R aymond. Raymond was a vice investigator; and apparently the three crooked cops thought he w as getting too close for comfort. When R aymond stepped on the starter switch, the bomb e xploded, killing him. The mur der took place on January 14 of that year.

After surv eying the a vailable e vidence, P arsons pr epared a mockup of the bomb for the jury to see . In the *Los Angeles Herald and Express* May 10 photo, Parsons is seen displaying his mockup to prosecutor Gene Williams. It is a six-inch piece of pipe , three inches in diameter, capped at both ends , with a pair of wir es leading to it. Parsons stated that the original contained a pound of pressed powder and “jagged bits of metal.” The bomb destroyed

both the victim’s car and the garage it was parked in.

After leaving the courtroom on May 6 Parsons went to the desert near Lancaster with a w orking model of the alleged pipe bomb , destroying an old car with it. Despite intense cr oss-examination, Parsons r emained firm in his testimon y that the bomb contained smokeless powder and not some other e xplosive. The *Los Angeles Times* speaks highly of him in this r egard. He could not be shak en, remarkable for a 23-year-old.

JPL reconstructs the GALCIT project’s organizational chart of 1941 showing John Parsons in char ge of its solid fuel program.



Several police officer s refused to testify against their former colleagues during the course of the lengthy trial, but the three were convicted nonetheless . A bomb thr eat w as called in on the da y of Parsons' testimony, the caller stating, "I am a friend of Kynette and a member of the police for ce, and y ou tell [special pr osecutor] Joe Fainer if he doesn't la y off K ynette I'll bomb him the w ay Harry Raymond was bombed." F ainer was not bombed, but this incident may have had something to do with Parsons' death 14 years later.

The same month of the trial, Ma y 1938, a technical article aimed at r ocketeers appear ed in *Astronautics: Journal of the American Rocket Society*, issue 41. Parsons was not mentioned. On July 15, the morning edition of the *Pasadena Star-News* printed a mor e sensational article, in which Parsons and Forman appear in a large photograph, Parsons in a dark suit, Forman in a cream-colored jacket with matching driver's cap. Forman smokes thoughtfully as both men lean on their elbo ws in fr ont of their launch appar atus. A small, single-stage model rocket hovers just overhead—obviously inserted into the photo by means of double-e xposure. The article giv es some highlights of the pair' s work in the Arr oyo Seco. By this time T sien had taken leave from the group, later returning to work on Rocket Project No. 1 at Caltech, while P arsons and the other s worked at GALCIT in the *arroyo*.

The *Los Angeles Examiner* ran its o wn account of w ork in the *arroyo*. The article doesn't vary from the *Pasadena Star-News* article, except for having a different photo. This *L.A. Examiner* photo is one of the best early photos of P arsons and Forman around. Unlike the Pasadena photo, it w as actually tak en indoors. The caption could have read "Gentlemen Rocketeers." Both men wore dark jackets and ties, with hair slick ed back and mustaches w ell-trimmed. Parsons stands on the left, holding a multi-stage rocket, while Forman kneels on the right, inspecting the spring-oper ated testing device.

Unlike Parsons, Malina did not appr eciate publicity, feeling that the group hadn't accomplished anything worth publicizing. Nearly a year elapsed before Malina said anything more about Parsons in letters home, and one can almost feel the tension as the "good intelligent friends" drifted apart. Malina' s letter s w ere no w full of references to r oommate and fello w doctor ate candidate Martin Summerfield. On October 24, 1938, Malina wrote, "A 'big shot' from the Army Ordnance division w as here today. He told of the arm

y’s experience with r ockets and thought ther e was little possibility of using them for military purposes . I silently r ejoiced, ho wever Parsons, who is about broke, was not so happy about it, as he hoped to get some funds for research from the army.”

This sour ce of funding became another contentious point, as Malina w as against all military applications of his w ork. He w as interested in civilian inno vations only—namely , scientific applications that would benefit mankind, as well as possibly (eventually) an improved means of travel. Parsons was interested in the end result—working rockets—and wasn’t concerned about how he got there. As it turned out, both Malina and the “big shot” were wrong—there *were* military applications for rockets just around the corner.

At one point Malina was invited to visit Ruben Fleet, President of the Consolidated Aircraft Company in San Diego, who gave Malina a tour and asked him about the possibility of rocket-assisted takeoffs of “big, heavy planes.” Malina left, intrigued, but nothing came of the meeting until thr ee years later, after P arsons had spent some mor e time experimenting. In fact, seaplanes were not fitted with JATOs until 1943 and they were liquid-fueled.

Malina also prepared a scientific paper for a contest in France that was sponsored by André Louis Hirsch, a banker with an above-average interest in rocketry. The contest was to award a cash prize to the best paper on current issues in the field. Malina won, but because of the war he did not learn of his prize until 1946—far too late for the winnings to help the pr oject. Tsien appears to ha ve helped Malina with the a ward-winning paper, though it bor e Malina’s name solely as author.

At this time, an interesting reversal of responsibility is recorded in Malina’s letters home , in which he had written that P arsons and Forman “disappear for weeks or months sometimes with me trying to keep the project alive. They were working for the powder companies and testing their own rockets during these times .” Malina took other time-consuming jobs, including wind-tunnel studies and a soil conservation project. Such outside endea vors increased tension in the group. Four months later, in a letter dated F ebruary 19, 1939, Malina wrote, “Parsons is doing some experiments with powder and is disgusted with me for not putting mor e time in to the r esearch.” The

results of the powder experiments were written up by Parsons, who shar ed a b yline with F orman in issue 43 of *Astronautics*. Certainly this b yline was merely a courtes y, as the article is obviously Parsons' work.

The title of the article is "Experiments with Powder Motors for Rocket Propulsion by Successive Impulses ." Like Parsons' previous paper, it w as classified during the w ar, though the article w as presumably still in circulation. The article begins with an editorial comment fr om the publisher to the effect that "the American R ocket Society belie ves the liquid fuel r ocket motor has v ery definitely proven its superiority over powder motors . . ." This assertion would be proven wrong in two years' time.

The article, the technical analysis of which leaves little doubt that Parsons was the author, starts with a discussion of Goddar d's work from 1919 forward and includes Goddard's early results with rockets using black po wder as a fuel, a method b y which he w as able to achieve altitudes of 8000 feet, i.e., a mile-and-a-half up. Parsons then goes into a detailed explanation of his own test apparatus, including very e xact specifications used to construct his r ocket motor s. Hercules black powder alone was used in the first series of tests, and different results were obtained for differ ent degrees of compr ession (i.e., ho w densely the po wder was packed into the r ocket). Other powders were used in the r emaining experiments, including smokeless varieties, and different types of wads were used at the bottom to hold the fuel in. Most char ges were ignited by an electric wir e run through this wadding and into the fuel source.

Parsons concludes the article with the assertion that po wder was indeed efficient enough to pursue further. Indeed, he and Forman got rockets to r each velocities of 7150 feet per second (4875 miles per hour) in this series of tests , which appr oached what Goddar d had achieved 20 years earlier. Parsons said they were working on an erosion-resistant insert of special steel as w ell as a satisfactory method of measuring chamber pr essures. Erosion was often a pr oblem with the throat nozzle—the part of the rocket from which the burning fuel leaves the r ocket and pushes it up. In the article , Parsons thanked Malina, Tsien, a Mr. Spade of the Ludlum Steel Compan y, and a Mr. Henry N. Mar sh of the Her cules P owder Compan y, which w as Parsons' original emplo yer from 1932. A t the time the article w as written, Parsons was employed by Halifax Explosives.

Around this time some mone y finally came thr ough, and the school received a $10,000 grant to work on solid-fuel rockets, based on the gr oup's pr ogress. About this time , F ritz Zwicky , who had taken graduate courses under Einstein, scolded Malina for thinking that a rocket could ever fly in space , asking how the exhaust could push against a v acuum. What Zwicky didn't r ealize w as that displacement of mass w as all that w as needed. On Mar ch 13 Malina wrote, "Parsons and Forman are to work full time and earn enough money to affor d smoking r eady-rolled cigar ettes. P arsons' wife [Helen] will be happ y that she is not the only br eadwinner in the family." Parsons' good friend Rypinski related much the same thing, that Helen would "cry on his shoulder" that Parsons would only save his money for rockets, and not spend it on her.

This stroke of financial luck was the result of a visit by H.H. "Hap" Arnold, commanding gener al of the Arm y Air Corps . Arnold w as a sharp individual who would work with von Kármán for many years after the w ar, and alw ays on the look out for some ne w scientific development to be used for military applications . Unlik e the previous military "big shot" who visited, Arnold w as intrigued b y the possible uses for r ockets. Ed F orman, for instance , r ecalled Arnold's suggestion that r ockets might help airplanes tak e off while being as much as 50% over payload.

Arnold had w orked with v on Kármán befor e. Though Arm y Ordnance was against exploring the possibilities of rockets, Hap was less conv entional, and had tak en Malina and v on Kármán to Washington the year previously on an unrelated matter. He knew talent when he saw it and convinced the National Academy of Sciences' Committee on Air Corps Research to fund the grant. Von Kármán and Robert Millikan were both members of the committee , which made Arnold's job much easier . There were actually se veral aeronautics projects being funded at this time, but the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) avoided the r ocket project, opting to w orking on the problem of deicing air craft windshields. "Kármán can tak e the Buck R ogers job" said the head of their aer onautics department. Kármán was glad he did and later called the project "one of the most fascinating periods of my career."

On April 18, 1939, a pr oposal w as submitted to the Boar d of Directors at Caltech entitled, "Pr oposal for a Jet Pr opulsion Experimental Station at the

Guggenheim A eronautical Laboratory of the California Institute of Technology." The draft I have seen has the title "Chairman, Subcommittee for Jet Pr opulsion Research" below the signature block. Presumably this "Chairman" w as von Kármán, though the work is probably Malina's. Two pages of summary are followed by an $80,000 cost estimate for the initial annual budget, with a footnote explaining that the figure does not include the cost for constructing the facility itself.

As to the construction, F orman later told a Lockheed compan y newsletter that he made an arrangement with a local bulldozer operator who worked for the city to grade the experimental station arena in the Arroyo Seco. The group itself fabricated the buildings from timbers and other items found in the *arroyo*, a "complex" that was a far cry from the 6000-employee facility JPL of today. In his memoir, von Kármán says he originally obtained the land, countering F orman's similar, and perhaps exaggerated, claim.

In the follo wing months, Parsons and F orman are mentioned in passing in several Malina letters, and both earn a longer mention in his letter of A ugust 21 when a lar ge explosion hit the building the y were working in on campus . The explosion occurred at 8:2 0 in the morning, "too early for Parsons and Forman to be at work," causing $10,000 in damage to the building—the entire value of the grant. The explosion caused an unr ecognizable film to deposit itself on e verything in the building, and when Parsons and Forman finally arrived, the Caltech staff were waiting for them with cleaning rags, expecting the two to clean it up. As had happened after the e xplosion of 1937, the group was soon working back in the *arroyo*.

On October 21, Parsons and Forman received invitations to a staff dinner at the Athenaeum, but old, social prejudices arose when they presented themselv es at the door . "You tw o ar en't Caltech staff. You're from town," they were told by the overzealous doorman, who wouldn't let them in despite their invitations. About this time Malina arrived and convinced the man the pair should be let in just this once, to save face for Caltech, claiming he would ensure that the mistake of inviting them w ould not be made again. The doorman w as swayed, and the two were finally allowed to enter.

On No vember 26, 1939, the magazine supplement to the *Los Angeles Sunday Times* ran an article on Parsons, Forman and Malina featuring a

photogr aph of the fir st two, stating that the thr ee “ are tired of explaining they are not trying to build a rocket ship for initiation of the fir st airline tour s to the moon.” Their goal, the article said, was the exploration of the properties of near space. No mention of Hap Arnold’ s pr oject w as made , but other scientists’ ideas on accomplishing this exploratory feat were also discussed. The accompanying photo shows Forman at the controls of a liquid fuel test pit, which replaced the earlier open-air tests, as well as the old-fashioned sandbags still in hea vy use . In the photo P arsons stands behind Forman, taking notes . Later he had the idea of photogr aphing the gauges rather than trying to write everything down during the short-duration burns, a policy that made it much easier to document the actual readings.

Around this time Parsons made an interesting discovery in Robert Rypinski’s library, a disco very that w ould change the dir ection of Parsons’ personal life as much as Bollay’s lecture changed the direction of his pr ofessional life . When P arsons rummaged thr ough Rypinski’s library he found a cop y of Aleister Cr owley’s *Konx Om Pax*, published in 1907, which Rypinski had bought years earlier. The discovery, Rypinski said, was to Parsons “like real water to a thirsty man.” Rypinksi himself never had figured out the rather dense book, so he gave it to Parsons, who soon told him he had entered into correspondence with its author.

Although r ecorded in se veral places , including Nat F reedland’s *The Occult Explosion* and Sybil Leek’s *Diary of a Witch* , the story is untrue that Crowley had once been in Pasadena long enough to start a lodge for his mystical order, the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO). In reality, Crowley did make a brief stopo ver in Los Angeles in 19 15—and couldn’t wait to leave. Not until 20 years later would there be an official r epresentative of the OTO in the ar ea, namely Wilfr ed T albot Smith, at whose home P arsons was to present himself shortly after his discovery of Cr owley. It seems mor e than coincidental that the only lodge of the OTO was located within a fe w miles of P arsons’ home.

Some familiarity with the magus Cr owley (1875-1947) will be assumed throughout the remainder of this book, though I will elaborate on the elements of his w ork that have a direct bearing upon the work of John P arsons. Readers wishing to learn about Cr owley are referred to the w orks listed in the bibliogr aphy; however, a satisfactory biography of the powerful

and enigmatic Crowley remains to be published.

Crowley's Los Angeles representative, Smith, was from Tonbridge, Kent, about 2 0 miles southeast of London. He started his magical career as a member of the original Agape Lodge in Vancouver, British Columbia—the fir st North American lodge of the OTO—of which "Frater A chad" (Charles Stansfeld Jones , 1885-195 0) w as the founder. Smith had met Cr owley at the Agape Lodge in 1915, during the latter's second American tour, and had soon risen to a position of greater authority in the Lodge , as A chad (Hebr ew for "Unity") fell into disfavor with Crowley and was eventually expelled for a variety of her esies. Smith mo ved to Los Angeles in 193 0, and, upon his arrival, began w orking on r eopening the A gape Lodge, sometimes referred to as Agape Lodge #2. Smith's colleague was Regina Kahl, who served as his High Priestess of the Gnostic Mass. The two are said to have run the Agape Lodge very strictly, almost tyr annically. Separ ate photos of K ahl and Smith ar e reproduced in Crowley's OTO publication, *The Equinox*, vol. III, no. 10.

The Gnostic Mass was Crowley's replacement for the "corrupted" mass celebr ated b y the R oman Catholic and Eastern Orthodo x churches. The text of the Mass, referred to as Liber XV, was written in Moscow in 1913. Partly inspired by the Russian Orthodox Mass, it is surprisingly Christian in its s ymbology, and ther e is nothing obscene about it despite what certain detractors may say. In fact, it is reminiscent of W agner's *Parsifal* with its r epeated r eferences to "lance" and "Gr ail," which ar e its most suggestiv e elements. As in the Christian Mass, the Holy Spirit is invoked often. The most openly erotic element in the mass occurs when the priestess disrobes for part of the ceremony.

The Gnostic Mass is too long to reproduce here but may be found in its entirety in Crowley's book, *Magick*. It is also r eprinted in section IV of *Gems from the Equinox*, edited by Israel Regardie, and *The Equinox* vol. III, no. 10, as well as various locations on the internet. It w ould ha ve been inter esting to see what Cr owley and the OTO would ha ve done with the Gnostic Libr ary disco vered at Nag Hammadi by Egyptian Bedouins in 1945, two years before Crowley's death. However, the library was not published until 1978; thus , the Mass was not influenced by any of its previously unknown texts.

Originally intended by Crowley as the central ceremony of the OTO, both public and priv ate, the Gnostic Mass is a rite conducted toda y by the *Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica* (“ECG”—the Gnostic Catholic Church) and celebr ated regularly in major cities ar ound the w orld. Evidently, visitors are usually welcome, provided they are willing to partake of the gnostic eucharist. The EGC is a religious body whose history and structure overlap that of the OTO.

Parsons became inv olved with the OTO when an unkno wn scientific colleague took the r ocketeer to a meeting at Smith’ s house in Hollywood, after which Parsons and his wife, Helen, began attending the various meetings of the lodge, as well as the weekly performance of the Gnostic Mass . The “Chur ch of Thelema,” which Smith had incorporated for this purpose, used the Gnostic Mass as a r ecruiting ground for the OTO.

In the OTO Parsons had found a ne w outlet for his r omantic notions. By day he was a student of the ph ysical sciences; by night, of the occult sciences. In *Analysis By A Master of the Temple* he wrote of his first impressions of Smith: “The alternate repulsion and attraction you felt the fir st year after meeting [Smith] w ere caused b y a subconscious r esistance against the or deals ahead. Had y ou had these experiences before, without such r esistance, you would have become hopelessly unbalanced.” The 25-year-old Parsons eventually discovered in Smith what Malina had found in v on Kármán: a father figure who could act as mentor to his hungry intellect, something Parsons had been sear ching for since the death of his gr andfather eight years earlier—indeed, since he was old enough to hear the tales of how wicked his real father had been.

The Sign of Horus: SILENCE.

three

A Short History of the OTO

The *Ordo Templi Orientis* (Order of the Temple of the East) is a quasi-Masonic initiating body founded in Germany just after the turn of the century . Its German name is *Orientalischer Templer-Orden* (Oriental Order of Templars), and there is purportedly a secr et meaning to the letter s " OTO" as w ell. The occultic or der's highest gr ades ar e said to inv olve w orking with "tantric" exercises, usually referred to as sex magic.

Publicly the Ordo Templi Orientis claims descent from some of the great her etical mo vements such as the Ba varian Illuminati, the Rosicrucians, the Albigensians and Cathars, the Knights Templar, and various early gnostic sects. These claims are very helpful, for they aid in placing the OTO within a proper historical context, as we can guess much about it fr om its spiritual for ebears. However, it is also desirable to learn about the secular origins of the OTO as well.

The Or der tr aces its modern origins to tw o men: Carl K ellner and Theodor Reuss (pronounced "Royce"). Kellner, born September 1, 185 1, was a wealthy Austrian industrialist who had made a good bit of mone y as a paper chemist. Reuss was born June 28, 1855 in Augsburg, Germany, about 15 miles northwest of Munich. Both men were born not long after the German Revolution of 1848, and thus lived in a world of Prussian military expansion. Borders changed often during their lifetimes . At various points throughout the men's lives, Austria and Germany were intermittently a part of Prussia, then a major western power.

Reuss became a Mason in 1876, and w as also a singer, journalist and possible sp y for the Prussian police . It is alleged that he infil-trated the Socialist League founded by Karl Marx's daughter and her husband. It is inter esting to note ho w many famous occultists ar e said to have had connections with intelligence organizations, the military, and the police , such as R euss, Crowley, Parsons, John Dee , Grady McMurtry, Anton LaVey,

Michael Aquino, to name a few.

Reuss was also w orking on a r evival of the Ba varian Illuminati, dispersed nearly 1 00 y ears earlier, and w as at the same time the Grand Master of the S wedenborgian Rite in German y, as w ell as a Magus of the Societas Rosicruciana (“Rosicrucian Society”).

Kellner was an initiate of the influential Hermetic Br otherhood of Light (HBL), founded by P.B. Randolph around 1870. The history of the HBL is not germane to our story , but its rites included sacr ed applications of sexual energy, and Crowley names the HBL in writing as the sour ce of the OTO’s “secret,” which is se xual in natur e. The reader desiring mor e information on the Hermetic Br otherhood of Light is directed to Allen Greenfield’s published history of the order, listed in the bibliography herein.

Kellner was also a high-r anking Freemason and a student of the Eastern mysteries. In the 1890s , Kellner claimed to ha ve met thr ee adepts from the East. One was a Sufi, Soliman ben Aifa, and the other two were Hindu tantrik as, Bhima Sena Pr atapa of Lahor e, and Sri Mahatma Agamya Paramahamsa. After their meeting, Kellner alleged he had found a “K ey” (German: *Schlüssel*) to “the My steries,” the heart of esoteric rites.

The word KEY turns up so many times in the telling of this tale that it reminds one of the pulp publisher Ray Palmer, who always said he had a FACT which proved the validity of Richard Shaver’s wild Dero tales. It’s as if the word itself has a hidden meaning. Kellner’s Key, of course, was sex magic; perhaps the implication w as key-in-lock sexual symbolism.

In 1895, Kellner proposed to Reuss that they disseminate this newfound Key thr ough an or ganized masonic rite . K ellner planned a reformation of the Hermetic Br otherhood of Light in German y, a series of three degrees that would be open only to the highest-r anking masons. Reuss used his masonic connections to acquire the 90th and 96th degrees of the Ancient and Primitiv e Rite of Memphis and Mizraim, and the 33r d degree of the Ancient and A ccepted Scottish Rite, from John Yarker, a masonic historian in England. Despite its initial association, the OTO eventually retreated from Masonry, beginning with Crowley, who abandoned any claim to “make” Masons.

One of the K ellner-Reuss Or der’s platforms w as the Swedenborgian Rite

, named for the S wedish m ystic Immanuel Swedenborg, which w as used for the fir st three “Craft” degrees of Freemasonry (Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason), with the other, higher degrees serving as a vehicle for dissemination of the Key. Things seem to have been finalized somewhat within the Order in 190 2, at which time the Memphis-Mizr aim degr ees were acquired. Initiations began, but students who adv anced were often shocked at the r evelation of the K ey; other s r eportedly found it absurd, and man y left the as-y et unnamed or der. Occultist F ranz Hartmann (1838-1912) was one early member who left, ar ound the time the order began calling itself “ OTO.”

On June 7, 190 5, K ellner, no w kno wn as F rater R enatus, died. Reuss, who had already taken the lead role, was fully in charge now, and it was apparently he who chose the name Or do Templi Orientis, since the appellation e vidently did not e xist before 1905. As to the significance of the name, the east (Orientis), of cour se, is where the sun rises, and is also where Kellner found his Key.

Within this body of adepts , R euss w as kno wn v ariously as “Merlin” and “Peregrinus,” and it w as he who set up the 1 0-degree structure of the OTO that remains in place today. He also wrote various rituals for each degr ee, but most of these ar e no longer in use , having been replaced by those of Crowley.

Several famous occultists were chartered by Reuss to operate OTO lodges, including R udolf Steiner (186 1-1925), founder of Anthroposophy, who w as charter ed for a German lodge in 1906, although some of his spiritual descendants pr efer to ignore this fact today. Dr. Gerard Encausse (1865-1916), better known as Papus, was chartered in France in 1908. The absorption of the *Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica* formed another link betw een the P apus lineage and the modern OTO.

A Dr. Arnold Krumm-Heller (1879-1949), also known by the Aztec name Huir acocha, w as charter ed for all of Latin America, but he never took the Order any further there and it seems to have died out. The use of Aztec names is still a practice among well-to-do Mexicans today.

Aleister Crowley joined the OTO in 1910, thinking it w as just one of many other Eastern masonic lodges . He seems to ha ve collected degrees fr om

initiating bodies lik e some people collect postage stamps, and had been initiated all the w ay to the 33rd degree of the Scottish Rite in Mexico some 10 years earlier. He had also been initiated into the 90th and 95th degrees of the Memphis-Mizraim Rite by the same John Yarker who had giv en the 90th and 96th degr ees of that rite to Reuss. The OTO was just another order like any other—or so Crowley thought.

The famous story concerning Cr owley's initiation into the higher mysteries of the order goes like this: Crowley's *Book of Lies* was published in 1912, at which time he was an honorary VII° member of the OTO (and rather disappointed about it at that). After reading the book, Reuss appr oached Cr owley angrily , accusing the latter of ha ving revealed the secr et of the highest degr ee of the Or der, i.e ., the IX°. Reuss stated that Cr owley would be compelled to be initiated into that degree immediately, and thus sworn to secrecy.[16]

Crowley denied the allegation, so Reuss pointed out the offending passage to him. Crowley would say that he instantaneously knew the answer to all the m ysteries, the m ysteries of the OTO and of man y other spiritual traditions as well: He had the Key.

It is unclear what chapter of Crowley's book contained the passage that had riled Reuss. Robert Anton Wilson, popular author and writer of our introduction, says in *Cosmic Trigger* that it was chapter 69, but the most likely candidate appears to be chapter 36, the Star Sapphire, which is named in Crowley's *De Arte Magica* as containing the secret of the OTO. In r eading some of the other chapter s (15, e .g.) in *The Book of Lies*, it is difficult to believe that Crowley did not at least suspect the Key before his meeting with Reuss.

Regardless, Crowley was given the IX° in 1912, and the entir e written corpus of the Or der was at his disposal. He w ould soon r ewrite almost everything within it to bring it into line with his o wn magical discoveries. On April 21, 1912, Crowley was given the X° and authority over the entire British Isles. His own magical record says he learned the Key in June of that y ear, in actuality a r eference to when he tr anslated the documents from German into English. In 19 16, Crowley appointed Charles Stansfeld Jones, whom we have already met as Frater Achad, to be his Viceroy to North

America. Jones' X° name was Parzival. On May 10, 1921, Reuss chartered Jones as Head of the OTO for North America, but Crowley overturned this action after succeeding R euss.

Too many other charters and degrees were granted by the OTO to relate here. One of interest, although not part of our story, was to H. Spencer Lewis, founder of the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rosy Cross (A.M.O.R.C.), i.e., "the Rosicrucians." Lewis was given a document referred to as a "Gage of Amity" in 192 1, and his mail-or der mystery school San Jose , California, still thriv es toda y, e vidently without possessing the Key.

In 1917, Cr owley rewrote the OTO degrees again, especially the lower ones, removing most of the masonic material and r eplacing it with *thelema* (explained below). Reuss was in agreement, but other lodges would not be . In 192 0, R euss translated Crowley's Gnostic Mass into German and began to tr anslate *Liber AL* as well, until he had a stroke in the spring of that year. Crowley then assumed an acting role as head of the OTO until November 27, 1921, at which time he proclaimed himself "Outer Head of the Order." Jones and another X° initiate, Heinrich T ranker of the German *Pansophia* group, confirmed his position. Reuss died on October 28, 1923.

There were other orders that, although not a part of the OTO, were officially associated with it, man y of which w ere not pr epared to accept *thelema* when it was finally revealed to them by Crowley at a German conference in 1925. Readers interested in the histories of the various orders and br eakaway groups are referred to *The Equinox*, vol. III, no. 10, and the various online histories of the Order.

As noted, in 19 14 the A gape Lodge had been founded in Vancouver by Jones, AKA Achad/Parzival, under Crowley's authority. Crowley visited the lodge in 19 15, at which time he met Wilfr ed Smith, who had been a charter member of the Agape Lodge. The two got along well at that point.

Fifteen years later, in 1930, Crowley sent Smith to Los Angeles with the express intent of opening another lodge , also to be called A gape Lodge. The lodge was incorporated April 4, 1934, and its first meeting was held on September 21, 1935 in Hollyw ood. Smith was appointed as "Head" for the United States, for which office he bore the X° name "Ramaka."

In 1941, Grady McMurtry (October 18, 1918-July 12, 1985) was first

initiated into the OTO by Wilfred Smith at Agape Lodge No. 2. In 1943, Crowley gr anted McMurtry the IX° and the magical motto of “Hymenaeus Alpha,” in England, wher e the latter w as stationed during the war. McMurtry worked with Army Ordnance during World War II, served in Korea and retired a major. Today he is better remembered as the second Caliph of the OTO, while Karl Germer was the first Caliph, though he ne ver used that term. The thir d Caliph, Hymenaeus Beta, has been Outer Head of the Order since McMurtry’s death in 1985.

The gr ades of the Or do T empli Orientis ha ve r ather inv olved names and echo the grades of various masonic rites, as well as those of the Bavarian Illuminati. They are:

0. Minerval

I. Man & Brother

II. Magician

III. Master Magician

IV. Companion of the Royal Arch of Enoch

V. Sovereign Prince of Rose Croix, Knight of the Pelican & Eagle

VI. Illustrious Knight Templar of the Order of Kadosh & Supreme Companion of the Holy Grail

VII. Very Illustrious Sovereign Grand Inspector General

VIII. Perfect Pontiff of the Illuminati, Epopt of the Illuminati

IX. Initiate of the Sanctuary of the Gnosis

X. Rex Summus Sanctissimus, Supreme & Most Holy King

The first three grades are open to all who request them and correspond roughly to the “nur sery” gr ades of the Illuminati. The fiv e lower grades correspond to the “ chakras,” i.e., yogic/tantric energy centers, as well as to the “naked-eye” planets. Higher degrees are by invitation only. Most people are surprised to learn the VII° requires a vow of chastity. There is also an XI° that is not part of the formal structure but was developed by Crowley.

As noted, Crowley rewrote the OTO degrees, replacing the masonic material with what he called “thelema.” Thelema is the Gr eek for “will,” a word important in the w ork of Aleister Crowley for several reasons. In 1904, Cr owley “received” The Book of the La w, technically called *Liber AL vel Legis* , through the mediumship of his fir st wife, Rose Kelly, while the couple was in Cairo celebrating their honeymoon. The book was allegedly dictated by a discarnate entity calling himself Aiwass, also spelled Aiwaz before Crowley changed it for numerological reasons.

One of the precepts contained in *The Book of the Law* (abbreviated “AL”) is, “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the la w” (see AL III:13). Its oft-cited complement is, “Love is the law, love under will.” These two precepts are standard salutations for members of the OTO even toda y. The w ords for “will” and “lo ve” in Gr eek—*thelema* (θελημα) and *agape* (αγαπη), respectively—each have numerical values of 93, a number important in Crowley’s system of magick.

These phrases carry with them a great duty to live deliberately, to find one’s True Will *and then do it* and nothing else. Outsiders often interpret them as invitations to “free love,” but that definition is not necessarily so. Ho wever, the w ord *agape* is a r eference not only to “charitable love” but also to the “lo ve feasts” of the second-century Christians, especially as interpreted by the Christian Gnostics, which did include a se xual meaning. The A gape Lodge w as not called “Agape” for nothing.

A R osicrucian or der, the Golden Da wn—used as the basis for Crowley’s “ Astrum × Argenteum” magick al gr ading s ystem—was modeled more after the mystery schools of the ancients, with the purpose of taking the candidate for initiation thr ough a series of m ystical exercises and ritual ceremonies.

Around 1887, a manuscript in cipher was found in a bookstore by a Dr.

Woodman and/or Woodford. Woodman was a colleague of Dr . William Wynn Westcott, who in turn w as acquainted with Theodor Reuss. W oodman and W estcott called on Samuel “MacGr egor” Mathers to help them decipher it.

The manuscript consisted of rituals and analy ses of the T arot cards, as w ell as the addr ess of a F räulein Spr engel in Nur emberg, Germany. Upon being contacted by them, Anna Sprengel, as *“Sapiens Dominabitur Astris”* [Wise Mistress of the Stars?], sent the three men a charter for a ne w lodge in England: the Isis-Ur ania Lodge of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Da wn, which opened on Mar ch 2 0, 1888. All thr ee w ere charter ed at the 7°= 4 degree, “ Adeptus Exemptus,” and soon opened other lodges ar ound the British Isles . The Golden Dawn seems to have had a surprisingly large network.

According to the foundation m yth, Sprengel died soon after, and her r emaining German colleagues allegedly withdr ew all support from the English lodge; ho wever, as it turns out, the y never really existed. The English were on their own for now, but they felt assured that they had already received sufficient information to place them in contact with the mysterious “Secret Chiefs” of the Order.

Subsequently W oodman died, and in 1897 W estcott stepped down. Mathers began claiming to ha ve made contact with thr ee of the Secret Chiefs, a doubtful assertion. Mather s also soon started to work on his greatest achievement, the translation of *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* , which he had found in manuscript in a Paris library, the *Bibliotheque l’Arsenal*. This document explains how one may attain to the “Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.”

Crowley w as initiated into the Or der of the Golden Da wn on November 18, 1898, at the age of 23. This was his first initiation, and he took it with all seriousness. Many famous writers were also members of the Golden Dawn: Arthur Edward Waite, William Butler Yeats, and Arthur Machen, to name a fe w. Oscar Wilde’ s wife Constance was a member, as was Yeats’ mistress Florence Farr, an actress who was also the mistress of George Bernard Shaw.

The degr ee s ystem of the Golden Da wn w as later adapted b y Crowley for the A.˙.A.˙. and consisted of thr ee different schools or orders: the gr

ades 1 thr ough 4 in the Or der of the Golden Da wn proper; the gr ades 5 thr ough 7 in the Or der of the R osy Cross (a Rosicrucian reference); and the gr ades 8 through 10 in the Or der of the Silver Star.

The grades from 0 to 10 respectively are:

Probationer 0°=0
Neophyte 1°=10
Zelator 2°=9
Practicus 3°=8
Philosophus 4°=7
Adeptus Minor 5°=6
Adeptus Major 6°=5
Adeptus Exemptus 7°=4
Magister Templi 8°=3
Magus 9°=2
Ipsissimus 10°=1

Crowley adv anced thr ough the lo wer gr ades pr omptly, and w as overall quite pleased with the Or der, becoming an " adept," as he moved from the lower grades into the Order of the Rosy Cross.

The idea of the pr ogression through grades in the Golden Da wn was seen mor e as a teaching tool, some what like the Scottish Rite degrees of the Freemasons. A broad, religious order modeled after the Rosicrucians, the Golden Dawn, and subsequently Crowley's A∴A∴, are designed to bring the student to full spiritual potential in all areas.

The OTO, on the other hand, was conceived as a specialized rite to convey the Key that Kellner had discovered in the East. It then gr ew into a quasi-masonic initiating body , though the lo wer grades were initially granted honorarily to Masons in good standing with other lodges, and w ould subsequently be "de-masonized" b y Cr owley. Unlike the OTO, the focus of the Golden Da wn w as not se xual in nature, although Crowley later used sex magic for the purposes of his own continued self-initiation.

As early as 1899, ther e was already dissent in the Golden Da wn, and in 1900 Arthur E.W aite left to found his o wn or der. Another member br oke a way later to form the *Stella Matutina* ("Morning Star"). In addition, Mathers had been caught in his lie with Westcott regarding the e xistence of the

Germans , and all the inner turmoil broke up the remaining order quite quickly, a development Crowley attributed to occult forces coming down on Mathers in retribution for his having publishing the Abramelin book. The other members were angry for Mather s having initiated Cr owley into the 5°=6 degree, Adeptus Minor, for a variety of reasons. The two had to left the country to do this initiation, tr aveling to Mather s' home in Paris, where Mathers conferred the grade upon Crowley, during January 1900.

Crowley initially supported Mathers but could not do so forever, as Mathers slid further and further into madness. A lawsuit ensued, and Mathers declared in court that he w as one of the mysterious "Secret Chiefs," an affair Crowley parodied quite humorously. The parody is reproduced in *The Aleister Crowley Scrapbook* by Sandy Robertson.

Crowley pur sued his Golden Da wn w ork independently , later admitting other members under the aegis of the A∴A∴, but he would eventually openly claim all of the 10 degrees of the Order.

It w as into this str ange, esoteric and occult w orld that John Parsons stepped that fateful day when he received from Rypinski his first Crowley composition. This enigmatic fusion of "sex and rockets" was to pr ove a fascinating de velopment in the history of the aer ospace industry in America.

The Parsons invention, the solid fuel JATO cannister, now displayed at the Smithsonian.

four

Parsons' Double Life: 1940-1942

In 1940, the editor of *Astronautics* magazine compiled quotes fr om famous people under the heading "What They Think About Rockets," a few of which are worth excerpting here, as they indicate that, lik e John Parsons, even some of the "big thinkers" were looking to the star s. For example, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. C.G. Abbot, stated:

A few hundr ed thousand dollars invested today in the scientific development of rockets would pay the nation dividends amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars in the next two decades.

World-renowned pilot Charles Lindbergh opined:

The rocket offers the only known possibility of sending instruments to altitudes above those r eached by sounding balloons. Observations taken outside of the ear th's atmosphere or even in the higher levels of the atmosphere, would be of immense value in the study of such subjects as astr onomy, meteorology and terrestrial magnetism.

And Dr . John O . Ste wart, Associate Pr ofessor of Astr onomical Physics, Princeton University, declared:

With rockets speeds of 1000 miles per hour are possible by 1950. By 2050 a rocket trip to the moon at 25,000 miles per hour is not impossible.

Despite such open-mindedness in the w orld at lar ge, within the GALCIT group, all was not well, and Malina found reason to complain about Parsons and Forman again in a letter of April 7, 1940. The complaint had nothing to do with P arsons' ne wfound inter est in the occult, which Forman seems to have shared to a lesser degree. Malina had his o wn unorthodo xies, including communism. Malina' s mind was on mor e mundane matter s. He wr ote, "Need a good ph ysicist. Forman and Parsons are all right for some types of w ork, sometimes they are like inventors, in the worst sense of the word." This instance is the v ery last time Parsons is mentioned in an y of Malina's

letters home, except when his name appear s with the other s on a list of Aerojet founders. The break between the two was complete, although Parsons may not have realized it. Parsons remained with Forman, but Malina was with Summerfield, who joined the group that July. Later, Forman's widow would relate that her husband and Parsons thought Malina was unnecessarily "cold and arrogant" toward them.

In August 1940, *Popular Mechanics* devoted six pages to the work of Parsons and F orman in an article entitled, "Seeking P ower for Space Rockets," which is informativ e and w ell-illustrated. Malina is also mentioned but not pictured. A shorter article, "New Experiments with Rockets," appeared the following month in *Popular Science* and is also w ell-illustrated but ends with a discussion of the w ork of Robert Goddard and the potential military applications for r ockets. They ar e r eproduced in the pages that follo w. Only P arsons and Forman are featured, which speaks well to their level of involvement at this time. While Malina was head of the project in name by virtue of his status at Caltech, Parsons and Forman were the ones doing the dirty work.

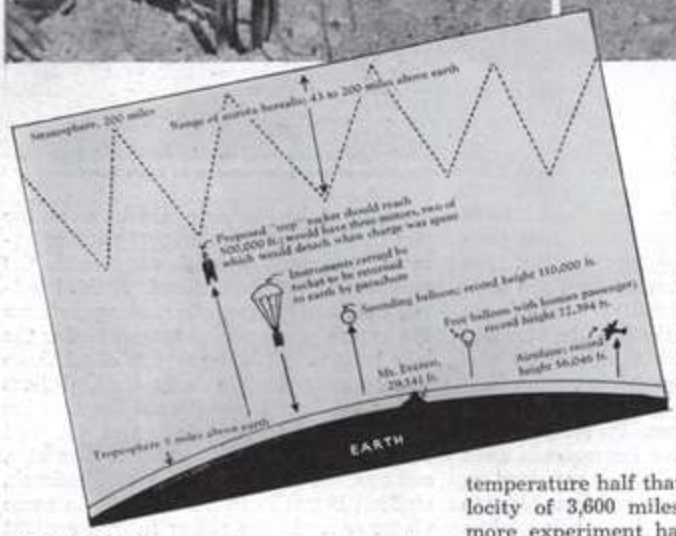
Also in 1940, the United States started sending ammunition and supplies to England, embar going Japan. Pr esident Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his Congress increased defense spending 800%, fr om $1.9 billion to $17 billion. V on Kármán began making fr equent trips to Washington, D.C, trips that w ould continue thr oughout the w ar. The city of Pasadena had 13,300 people working in the aircraft industry that year, a figure that may sound like a lot, but by the next year—after the United States entered the war—it had increased to 113,000. In order to r ecruit so man y workers, Boy Scouts w ere hired to distribute job applications door-to-door.

In that year, von Kármán and Malina demonstrated on paper the feasibility of long-dur ation burns in a confined space such as a rocket motor casing, a procedure that von Kármán later listed as the first critical step in the development of rockets in the United States. As a result, the National Academy of Sciences immediately doubled the GALCIT group's budget for 194 1, to $22,000. This action infuriated Goddard, working alone in Roswell, as he didn't appreciate the young upstarts getting all the funding and attention. His decades of work were indeed unappreciated by the world, mainly due to self-imposed isolation. Malina, Parsons and Forman shared the

byline on their feasibility paper, entitled, “Air Corps Jet Pr opulsion Research, Final Report for 1939-40,” a cop y of which is on file in the JPL archives.

Both John Parsons and Ed For man prominently appear in this August 1940 *Popular Mechanics* feature; John wearing black leather jacket and black suit jacket, and Ed clad in white.

SEEKING POWER


Stratosphere, 200 miles
Range of rockets hereafter, 43 to 200 miles above earth
Proposed "step" rocket should reach 500,000 ft.; would have three motors, two of which would detach when charge was spent
Instruments carried by rocket to be returned to earth by parachute
Sounding balloon; record height 110,000 ft.
Free balloon with human passengers; record height 72,394 ft.
Mt. Everest, 29,141 ft.
Airplane; record height 56,046 ft.
Temperature 4 miles above earth
EARTH

Small test rocket is loaded into firing stand, upper left, to trace its characteristic path. Above, putting powder charge in rocket. Diagram shows man's altitude records and his hopes for the rocket

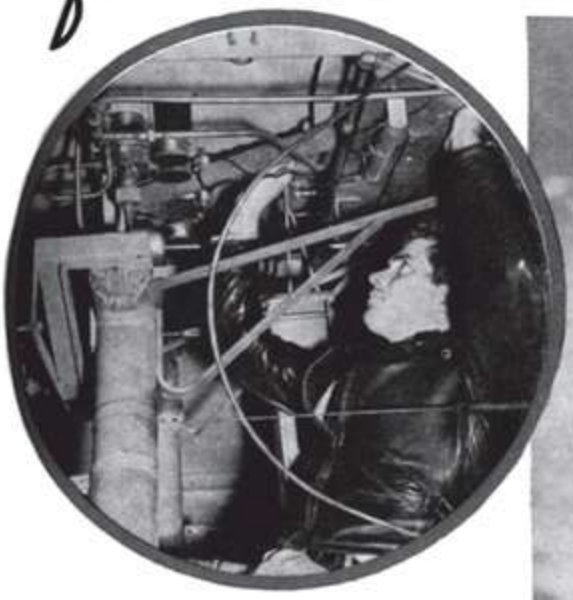
GUARDED by sandbags, a man sits before a panel on which are rows of gauges. As he turns valves, needles of the gauges spin and gyrate. From behind the sandbags comes a hiss, a puff of smoke.

The man relaxes, the gauges come to rest. If it were not for the tiers of protecting sandbags, it would seem undramatic, almost unimportant. Yet in those few seconds all the fires of hell have been raging in the little cylinder behind the sandbags. Terrifically explosive gases have just reached a temperature half that of the sun and a velocity of 3,600 miles per hour—and one more experiment has been added to the long list by which men have sought to gain knowledge which will enable them to conquer outer space.

Scientists are hard-headed men. They do not speculate on traveling to the moon every time they see a sky rocket. They say simply:

"We are experimenting with fuels for

for SPACE ROCKETS



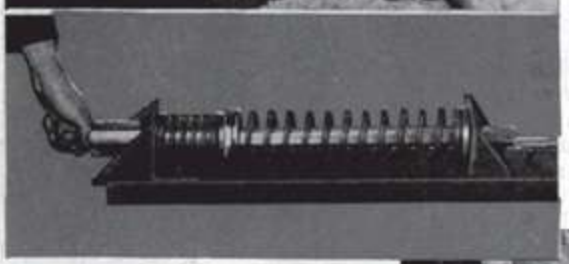
rockets. We've found out a few things. It may be that in the reasonably near future science will succeed in sending a rocket higher than any man-made contrivance ever traveled before. Perhaps such a rocket might reach an altitude of 500,000 feet.

"If a rocket could be shot that high, it could carry recording instruments which would gather information of the greatest importance. A rocket to the moon. Men still dream of that. But science deals with facts. Still, the dream is perhaps a little bit nearer realization."

Behind that simple statement is another chapter in man's struggle to escape the chains of gravity which bind him to one planet.

Three years ago it was decided to study rocket motors at California Institute of Technology. Although many rocket experiments had been conducted throughout the world, no complete and systematic investigation of motors has been available. Yet it is just those

Test apparatus for rocket motors, in circle, records temperatures of motor and exhaust gases, speed of intake gases, amount of gas used, etc. Right, a rocket starts up fired by remote control. Below, test rocket used at California Tech



very problems of a powerful enough fuel and a long-life combustion chamber that are the stumbling blocks which are holding back rocket flights.

So three experimenters at California Tech., Frank J. Malina, John W. Parsons, and Edward Forman, decided to build a rocket which did not fly, a rocket which moved but a few fractions of an inch, but which told those vital facts about what goes on when a charge is fired.

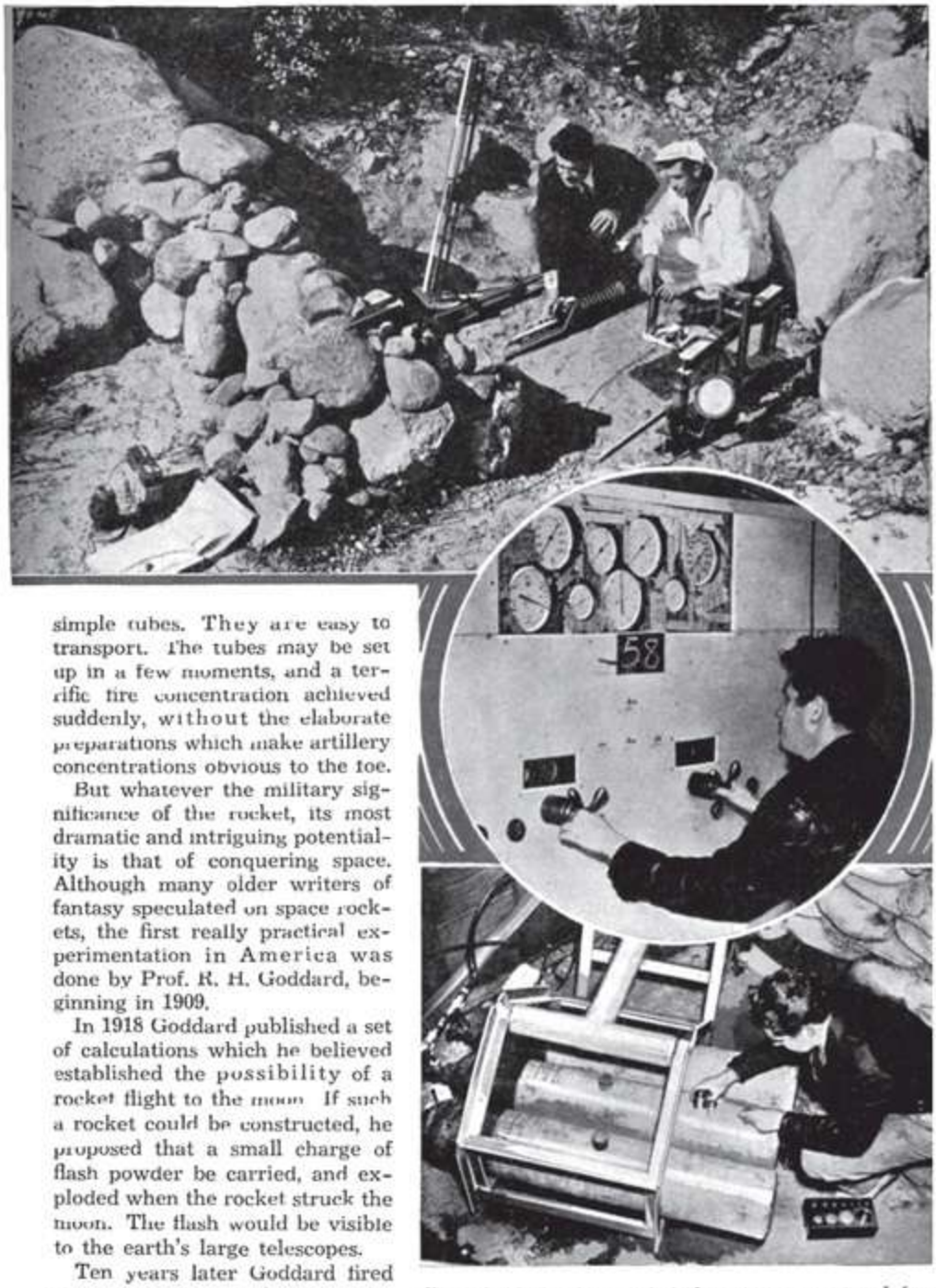
As a background for their work, they had the long history of rocket experimentation, going back to the days of early Chinese culture when rockets were first used for fireworks displays. The western world did not begin to construct rockets until about the fourteenth century. Immediately, the question of their possible military importance arose. But no one devised a successful military rocket until 1805, when William Congreve perfected one—and in so doing helped write the American national anthem.

For it was the Congreve rockets fired by the British forces attacking Fort McHenry that inspired Francis Scott Key to write the lines of the Star Spangled Banner, "and the rockets' red glare." Congreve rockets were also used with telling effect against Napoleon at Waterloo. Both incendiary and explosive charges were carried by these rockets. Not until modern artillery was developed did interest in military rockets wane.

However, the military potentialities of rockets have again come under serious consideration. With nations searching for new weapons, rockets were bound to have their day once more.

Major James R. Randolph of the U. S. Army recently set forth the advantages of military rockets. They are cheap, as no elaborate gun barrel or firing mechanism is needed. Rockets are fired from

To determine stability, a flying model is fired with powder by remote control, top. Center, recoil of spring gauges strength of powder fuels. Behind the sandbags (bottom) California Institute of Technology scientists test rocket motors and explosive fuel—mixture of oxygen and ethylene—developing 5,000-degree heat and gas velocities of 3,600 miles per hour



simple tubes. They are easy to transport. The tubes may be set up in a few moments, and a terrific fire concentration achieved suddenly, without the elaborate preparations which make artillery concentrations obvious to the foe.

But whatever the military significance of the rocket, its most dramatic and intriguing potentiality is that of conquering space. Although many older writers of fantasy speculated on space rockets, the first really practical experimentation in America was done by Prof. R. H. Goddard, beginning in 1909.

In 1918 Goddard published a set of calculations which he believed established the possibility of a rocket flight to the moon. If such a rocket could be constructed, he proposed that a small charge of flash powder be carried, and exploded when the rocket struck the moon. The flash would be visible to the earth's large telescopes.

Ten years later Goddard fired some experimental altitude rockets which attained a height of about two miles and a vertical

(Continued to page 118A)

Heavy barricade of stones is laid to protect operators before firing a rocket with its mighty explosive charge (top). Dials in center show the fury of the thrust of a rocket motor in operation, its fuel consumption, temperature of motor and exhaust, and intake velocity. Three tanks of ethylene gas, shown at bottom, are on a delicate balance accurate to one-tenth ounce

Seeking Power for Space Rockets

(Continued from page 213)

climbing speed of 700 miles per hour, far greater than the fastest airplane. Since that time, Goddard has continued his experiments in perfecting rocket design. Recently he incorporated a gyroscope to stabilize his rockets during flight.

However, the old problem of a sufficiently powerful fuel and a sufficiently durable firing chamber still remained. Certain experiments seem to favor the use of powder explosives, but in general, liquid fuels seem to offer the best prospects. A combination of liquid oxygen and gasoline has proved very efficient.

Rockets powered by such fuels have been used by the American and German rocket societies. A British society has made speculative plans for space travel should the day ever arrive when fuel and construction problems are licked. This society has designed space suits, and has even made tentative arrangements to secure human beings who would be willing to take the terrific gamble should the conquest of space ever be technically possible.

These problems of fuel and combustion chamber the California Tech. scientists have set out to study—and they have made such advancement that they talk of a sounding rocket which might reach a height of half a million feet.

The first problem faced was to design a highly accurate testing machine. Such a device must be able to register thrust, temperature, pressure of gases, amount of fuel used, and the efficiency of the combustion.

For experimental purposes gaseous combustibles are used instead of liquid. The propellant now being experimented with is a mixture of ethylene and oxygen. These gases are kept under pressures of 1,200 and 2,000 pounds to the square inch. Operators control the flow of gas by means of valves. The gauges which record the performance of the rocket motor are photographed to give a permanent record.

The rocket motor is a single steel cylinder about eighteen inches long and six in diameter. It is lined with carbon to guard against the terrific heat when the motor is operated. A temperature of 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit is sometimes reached—almost half that of the sun's corona.

Rocket motor, tanks of ethylene and oxygen, and connecting tubes are mounted on a torsion balance so delicate that it will register forces of only one-tenth of an ounce. When the motor is fired, motor, lines, and braces move as a single unit. The thrust is then registered by a dial on the control panel.

Because of the terrifically explosive character of all fuels used, the control panel and operator are protected from the firing chamber by sandbags. Once a nozzle blew out during a test, and the resulting roar was heard for blocks.

Nozzles for the rocket motor are made from such substances as pure carbon, stainless steel, and copper alloys. Experiments have shown that few substances will stand the extreme heat and pressure of the exhaust gases. Velocities of 6,000 feet per second, or better than 3,600 miles per hour, have been recorded. Often after one minute in the firing chamber, a nozzle, which a moment before was a beautifully machined piece of metal, will be charred, distorted, and blacked, looking as if it had been subjected to the eternal fires.

Rocket scientists have calculated that a velocity of seven miles per second, or approximately 25,000 miles per hour, would be necessary for a rocket to escape the earth's gravity. They further believe that 6,000 tons of fuel would be necessary to carry ten tons of pay load. The California men do not speculate on space travel. However, they do say that their experiments indicate that with a "step" rocket (one having three motors, two of which would be released during flight), a velocity of 11,000 feet per second might be reached. This would carry the rocket to a height of 500,000 feet, five times the record height for a sounding balloon. Physical information gathered by such a rocket would be of incalculable value.

Meanwhile, the motor behind the sandbags hisses and thrusts and the needles on the dials continue to write their record of vital facts. And another significant step is being taken in man's struggle to conquer space.

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At this time, Parsons received recognition and accolades not only in the aerospace industry but also in his personal life. One of the people in P arsons' new esoteric cir cle of friends w as the actr ess Jane Wolfe, who had appeared

in the silent films , *The Woman Next Door* (1919), *Men, Women and Money* (1919), and *Behold My Wife* (1920). Wolfe, who had chosen the magical name Soror Estai, had been with Crowley at Cefalu (his " Abbey of Thelema" in Italy) befor e coming back to California and the A gape Lodge, when Mussolini closed the Abbey. After her return she does not appear in any of the film guides. Adding to the Parsons' legend, Wolfe recorded her first impression of him in her "magical record" for December 1940:

Unknown to me, John Whiteside Parsons, a newcomer , began astral travels. This knowledge decided Regina [Kahl] to under take similar work. All of which I lear ned after making my own decision. So the time must be propitious.

Incidentally, I take Jack Parsons to be the child who "shall behold them all" [i.e., the Mysteries of *The Book of the Law* . See AL I:54-56, below].

26 years of age, 6′2", vital, potentially bisexual at the very least, University of the State of Califor nia and Cal Tech., now engaged in Cal Tech chemical laboratories developing "bigger and better" explosives for Uncle Sam. T ravels under sealed orders from the government. Writes poetr y—"sensuous only," he says. Lover of music, which he seems to know thor oughly. I see him as the r eal successor of Therion [Crowley]. Passionate; and has made the vilest analyses r esult in a species of exaltation after the event. Has had mystical experiences which gave him a sense of equality all r ound, although he is hierarchical in feeling and in the established order.

The passage in Cr owley's *The Book of the Law* to which Wolfe refers (AL I:54-56) reads, "Change not as much as the style of a letter; for behold! Thou, o prophet, shalt not behold all these mysteries hidden therein. The child of thy bowels, he shall behold them. Expect him not from the East, nor from the West; for from no expected house cometh that child." A t 26, Parsons was still a " child" in the e yes of the older members, at least in the spiritual sense, regarded by Wolfe as this "chosen one," so to speak.

Parsons' "mystical experiences," if they were recorded then, have since been lost and ar e unknown. For sake of comparison to Wolfe's portrayal, Parsons' FBI file describes him as 6 ′1", 185 pounds , with brown hair and brown eyes, medium build, and fair complexion. The remark "potentially bisexual at the very least" may refer to his admitted attraction to Smith, as

well as to another unique characteristic: at least two former work associates have said that Parsons sweated profusely, which caused str ong body odor that he tried to mask with heavy cologne. A man who wore a lot of cologne at the same time that he displayed an above-average interest in another man may have inadvertently giv en the impr ession of bise xuality. Parsons himself once expressed a latent homosexuality, and Aleister Crowley, Parsons' new idol, was well known for his bisexuality.

Like many other A gape Lodge member s, Wolfe was also in the A∴A∴. Crowley had initiated her at Cefalu as a Probationer 0°=0 on June 11, 1921, and had further recognized her as a Neophyte 1°=10 in May 1940, after she had written him to lament her long term as a Probationer.

Wolfe was not the last to identify P arsons' potential. After mor e than a y ear of attending meetings and the Gnostic Mass , John and Helen Parsons joined the A gape Lodge on F ebruary 15, 194 1, when they simultaneously joined the A ∴A∴. Just a fe w weeks after the y joined, in March 1941, Smith wrote to Crowley, "I think I have at long last a really excellent man, John P arsons. And starting ne xt Tuesday he begins a course of talks with a view to enlarging our scope. He has an excellent mind and much better intellect than m yself . . . John Parsons is going to be v aluable."

Parsons became "F rater T .O.P.A.N." and w as known as "F rater 210" for short. His wife became "Sor or Grimaud." The initials in Parsons' magical motto stood for *Thelemum Obtentum Pr ocedero Amoris Nuptiae* , Latin for "the obtainment of *thelema*—Will—through the nuptials of love." The initials T.O.P.A.N. were also a declaration of Parsons' dedication: To Pan. In Hebrew the enumeration for T .O.P.A.N. is 400+7 0+80+1+50=601. P arsons counted it as I.O.P.A.N., giving the mor e desirable sum 2 10, with "Io P an" being Greek for "Hail P an." Indeed, Cr owley's "Hymn to P an," which Parsons had memorized and often recited, begins, "Io Pan! Io Pan Pan!"

The numbers 1 through 20 add to 210. In the book 777 Cr owley also speaks of certain number s important to each of the *sephiroth* (spheres) of the k abbalistic Tree of Life. The fir st has the v alue 1, the second 1+2 =3, the thir d 1+2+3=6, and so on; ther e are 10 altogether. Although Cr owley does not sa y so, a little quick math will show these 10 values add to 210. In 777 Crowley calls the meaning of 210 "too holy" to divulge, an allusion to the

“N.O.X. formula.” N.O.X., Latin for “night,” is akin to “L.V.X.” or “Lux”—light. Both are portrayed during simple rituals of Cr owley’s that came fr om the Golden Dawn.

Coincidentally, the inter state highway running through Pasadena which makes a 90-degr ee turn due north of the beginning of South Orange Grove Ave., heading str aight to JPL, is numbered 210, as if some cosmic force numbered the highway in Parsons’ honor.

Helen’s chosen name, Grimaud, is a French name that ma y refer to a character in one of Lor d Bulwer-Lytton’s novels who acted as a “magical servitor.” Bulwer-Lytton is probably most famous for ha v-ing started a novel with the phrase, “It was a dark and stormy night.”

Eventually, Parsons came to vie w Smith as the father he alw ays wanted, and the tw o stayed in touch thr oughout their liv es, despite the many problems between them and with other member s of the lodge. While man y member s of the A gape Lodge drifted apart, Parsons and Smith continually came back to each other , and, although Parsons called Crowley “Father” in his many letters to him, the immediate presence of Smith was much more powerful.

In addition, P arsons’ inter est in science fiction continued into adulthood, and he attended many of the weekly meetings of the Los Angeles Science F antasy Society (LASFS), which met Thur sday evenings. LASFS started as chapter 4 of the Science Fiction League , one of many fan clubs begun in 1934 when Hugo Gernsback’ s magazine *Wonder Stories* announced the ne w program. All closed but chapter 4, which r emained a vital concern due to the w ork of one man—Forrest J. A ckerman. A ckerman has said that he r emembers meeting Parsons once, though others insist he must have met him on many occasions. Helen Parsons Smith remembers at least one meeting.

In 1940, Ackerman’s group became the independent LASFS, which, as home base for Los Angeles-area fans and writers, was quite active. JPL archivist John Bluth hear d that man y science fiction people fr e-quented Parsons’ house, but it was less common for Parsons to go to the LASFS. He was thus probably not a member, just an attendee.

At one of the Thursday meetings in 194 1, Parsons met one of his favorite author s, Jack Williamson, who r ecords this meeting in *Wonder’s Child*, his

autobiogr aphy. Williamson had written *Darker Than You Think*, which first appeared in the magazine *Unknown* in 1940, and was expanded considerably in 1948 for the book edition. In *Wonder's Child*, Williamson wr ote, "He [P arsons] had r ead m y novel *Darker Than You Think*, which deals with the supernatur al. I was astonished to discover he had a far less skeptical interest in such things than I." Nonetheless , it w as Williamson' s fa vorite story as well, and he identified with the main char acter, Will Barbee, who is horrified to disco ver he is really a werewolf, but gradually learns to accept his newfound powers.

Williamson subsequently w ent to P arsons' house for one of the Sunday afternoon meetings of fans and writer s that P arsons sponsored every week. He recorded the event in *Wonder's Child*:

I met John Parsons. An odd enigma to me, he was a r ocket engineer with unexpected leanings towar d the occult. He wanted to meet me because I'd written *Darker Than You Think*—a good many people have taken it mor e seriously than I ever did; witches now and then have taken me for a fellow Wiccan.

Parsons belonged to the OTO, an underground order founded, I think, by the satanist Aleister Crowley. One night Cleve Cartmill and I were allowed to climb after him into an attic to attend a secr et meeting. The ritual was disappointingly tame. Ther e was no nude virgin on the altar. Satan was not invoked.

Yet the priest impressed me. He was a lean, dynamic little man with bright, light blue eyes, driven by a vir ulent hatred of God. Talking to him after the ceremony, I found that he was the son of a British clergyman who must have been the r eal target of that savage animosity.

From the above description it sounds as if Williamson got to meet Wilfred Smith.

Darker Than You Think is the story of her editary werewolves who have discovered their true bestial nature and seek to revive the old ways and the old gods. They accomplish this revival under the leadership of the "Child of Night," who is the r esult of a magical pr odigious birth, finding him in the char acter of Will Barbee . Williamson's first science fiction treatment of werewolves (a novel approach at the time) had been in 1932, when he wrote

the short story, “Wolves of Darkness.”

The connection to Wicca and neo-paganism is obvious , as is the parallel to Parsons’ magical “Babalon W orking,” which will be the subject of chapter s 7 and 8. *Darker Than You Think* is even listed under “R eligion and Myths” in *The Visual Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. Williamson’ s book e vidently influenced P arsons’ writing, such as follo ws, which sounds lik e a fair s ynopsis of *Darker Than You Think*:

To go deep you must r eject each phenomenon, each illumination, each ecstasy, going ever downward, until you reach the last avatars of the symbols that are also the racial archetypes.

In this sacrifice to the abysmal gods is the apotheosis that transmutes them to the beauty and power that is your eternity, and the redemption of mankind.

Edd Cartier’s illustration for the 1948 Fantasy Pr ess edition of *Darker Than You Think,* Jack Williamson’s sci-fi novel John Parsons found extraordinarily inspirational.

"You must be strong, Will, to take such a shape!"

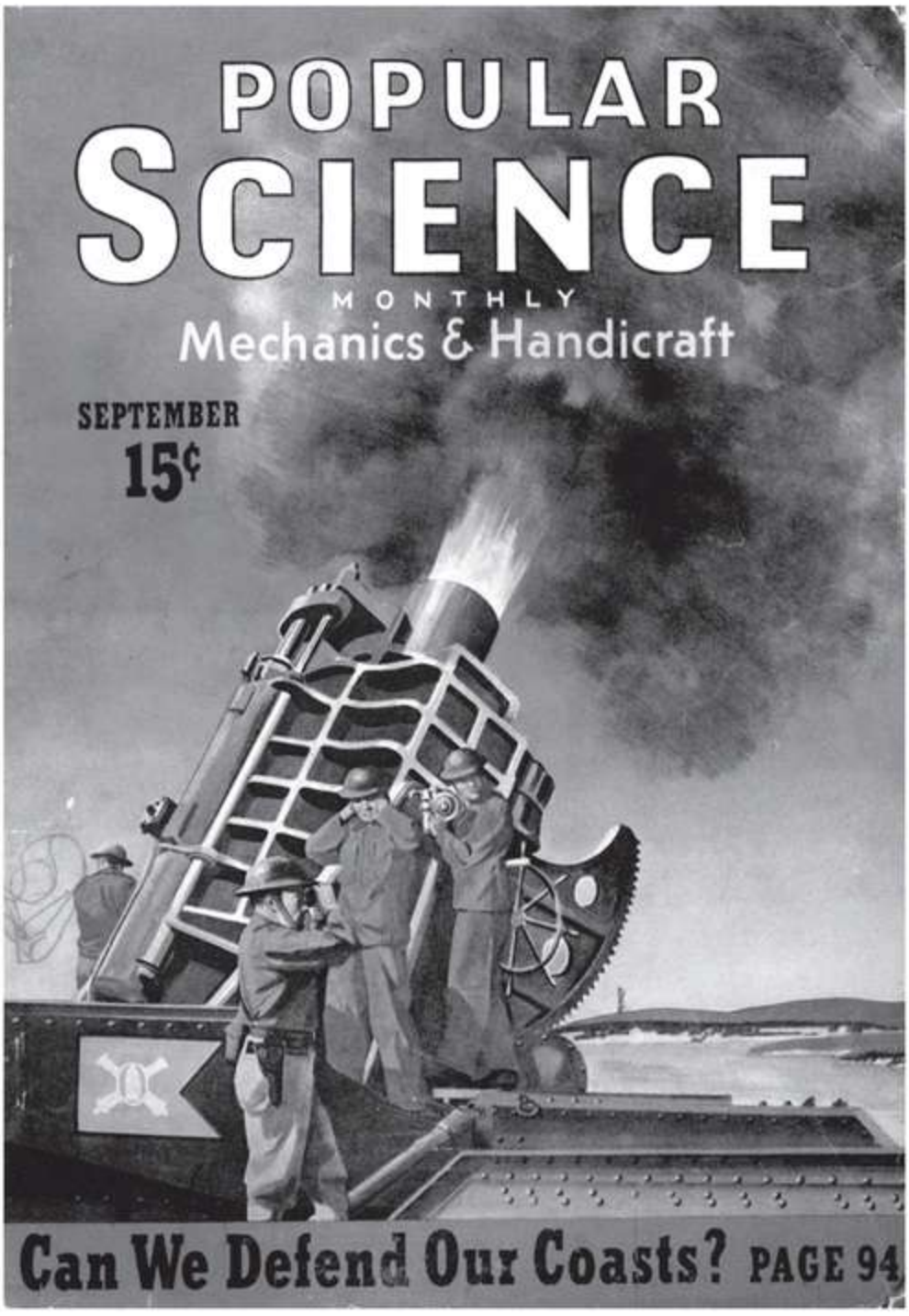
Several other authors visited Parsons, including A.E. V an Vogt, as well as regulars like writer Alva Rogers and science fiction illustrator Lou Goldstone . Another possible visitor w as E. Hoffman Price, a would-be writer who knew most of the people in the circle of H.P. Lovecraft, the famous fantasy and horror writer, as well as in much of science fiction fandom. Price later br agged of ha ving introduced occult ideas to Lo vecraft, whose tr eatments of Theosophical elements are well documented in his letters to Price, thus revealing that some of the material did indeed originate with the latter.

Parsons also met a young Ray Bradbury, or, rather, Bradbury met Parsons.

As Br adbury told me , “I only met him once , when I wa s a teenager and he came to lectur e at the Los Angeles Science F antasy Society in the late thirties . . . I w as merely part of a small audience of about 2 0 or 3 0 who w ere fascinated with his ideas about the future.”

One other per son who P arsons met at the LASFS was Gr ady McMurtry, who later became F rater Hymenaeus Alpha and was Karl Germer’s successor as Outer Head of the OTO, running the Order until his death in 1985.

Much has been made of a connection betw een Robert Heinlein and Parsons, and it has been said that Heinlein w as the fir st person to whom P arsons intr oduced his second wife , Camer on. Parsons is also thought to ha ve corresponded with Heinlein after his leaving Hollyw ood; unfortunately, Mr s. Heinlein destroyed all of her husband’s correspondence from the period before they were married. However, Mr s. Heinlein and L. Spr ague de Camp ha ve maintained that Heinlein did not know Parsons, although Cameron asserted their meeting occurr ed and was later covered up. Claims that Heinlein’ s *Stranger in a Str ange Land* was influenced b y Parsons and *thelema* are left to the r eader’s judgement.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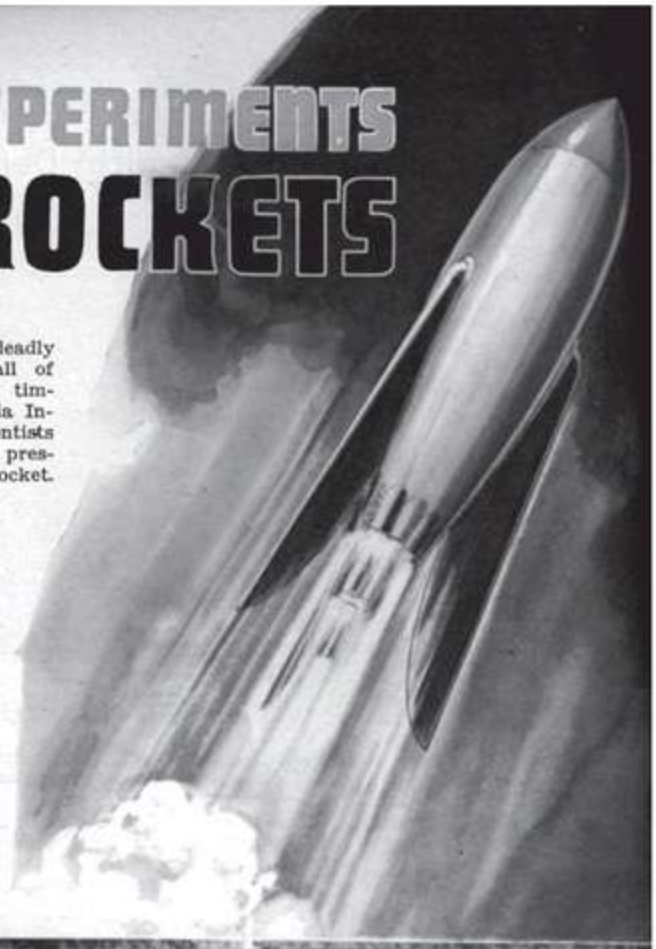
NEW EXPERIMENTS WITH ROCKETS



PROTECTED against deadly explosions by a wall of sandbags and heavy timbers, two young California Institute of Technology scientists feed explosive gases under pressure into the motor of a rocket. At the touch of a button, a leaping spark ignites the mixture, and with a roar, a sheet of flame, and a cloud of smoke, the gases go into action. Operating a camera, one of the researchers photographs a battery of instrument dials that reveal such vital facts as the thrust of the motor and the weight and pressure of the gases surging through pipes from metered chambers.

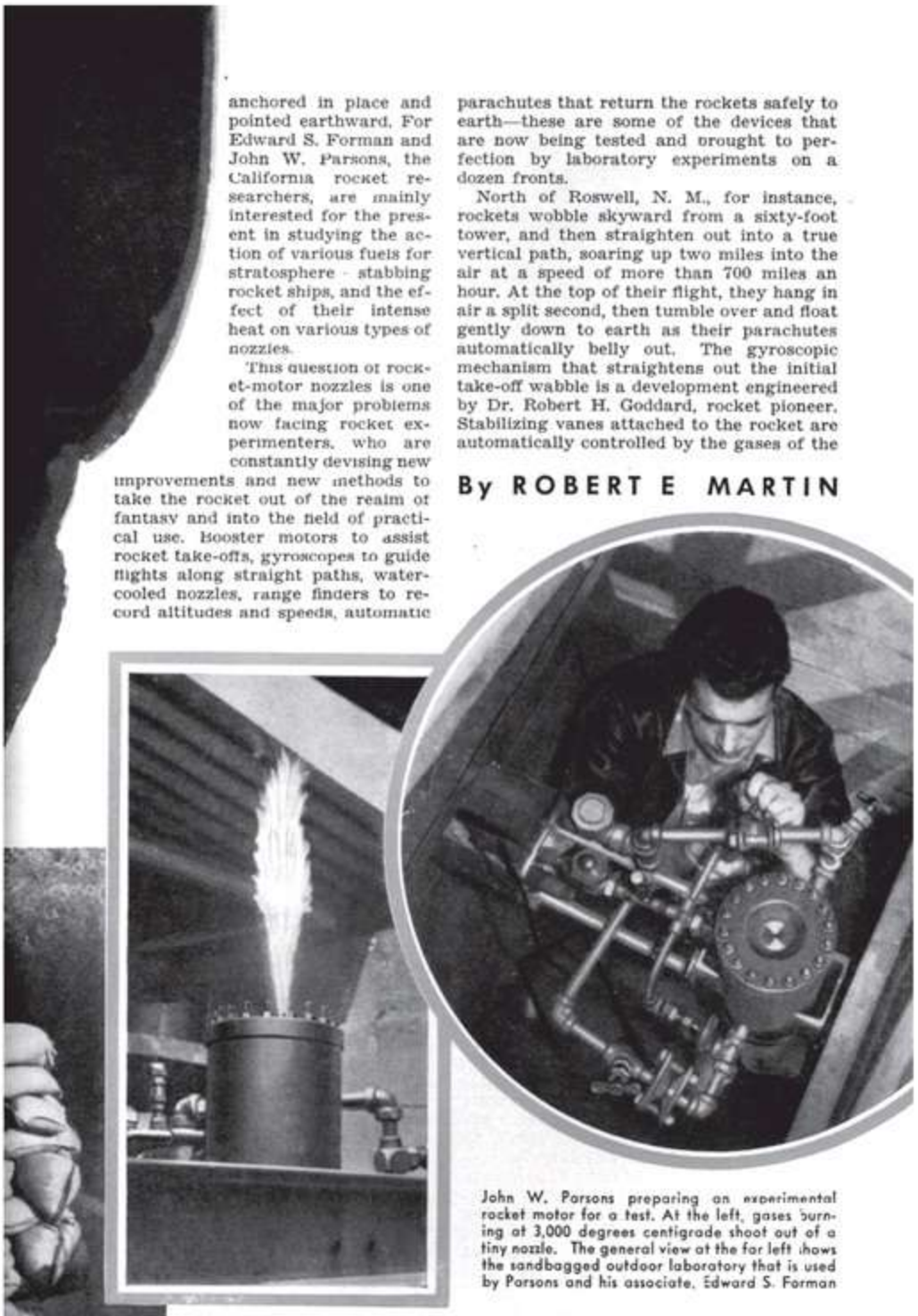
But the rocket itself, instead of soaring into the heavens, remains rooted on the ground, since it is

anchored in place and pointed earthward. For Edward S. Forman and John W. Parsons, the California rocket researchers, are mainly interested for the present in studying the action of various fuels for stratosphere - stabbing rocket ships, and the effect of their intense heat on various types of nozzles.

This question of rocket-motor nozzles is one of the major problems now facing rocket experimenters, who are constantly devising new improvements and new methods to take the rocket out of the realm of fantasy and into the field of practical use. Booster motors to assist rocket take-offs, gyroscopes to guide flights along straight paths, water-cooled nozzles, range finders to record altitudes and speeds, automatic parachutes that return the rockets safely to earth—these are some of the devices that are now being tested and brought to perfection by laboratory experiments on a dozen fronts.

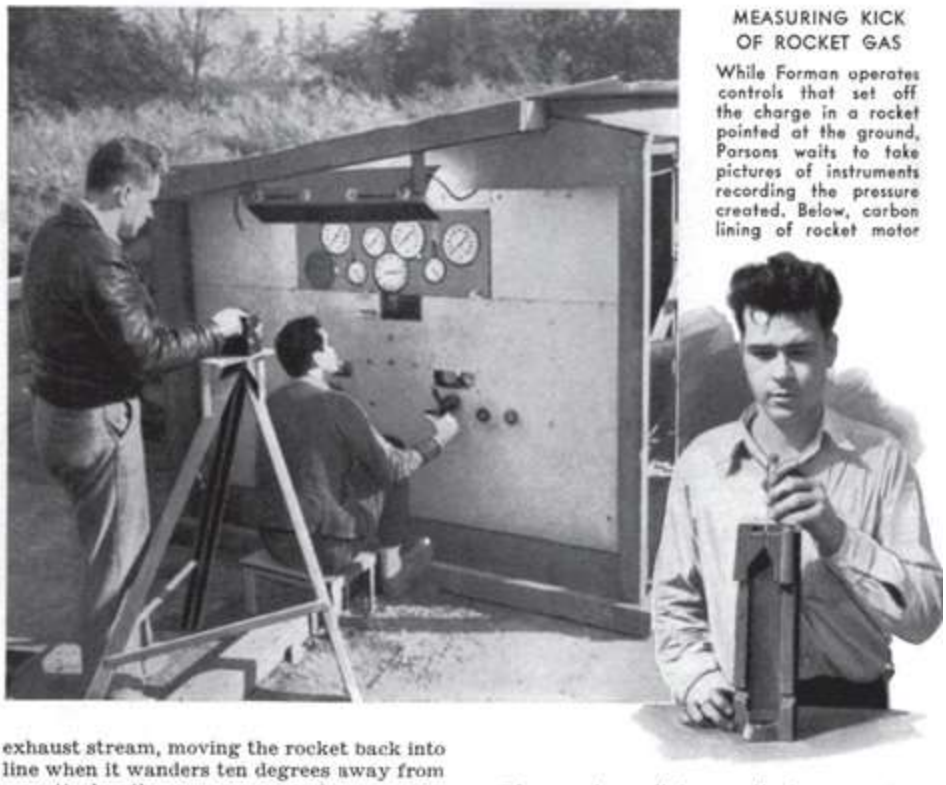
North of Roswell, N. M., for instance, rockets wobble skyward from a sixty-foot tower, and then straighten out into a true vertical path, soaring up two miles into the air at a speed of more than 700 miles an hour. At the top of their flight, they hang in air a split second, then tumble over and float gently down to earth as their parachutes automatically belly out. The gyroscopic mechanism that straightens out the initial take-off wabble is a development engineered by Dr. Robert H. Goddard, rocket pioneer. Stabilizing vanes attached to the rocket are automatically controlled by the gases of the

By ROBERT E MARTIN



John W. Parsons preparing an experimental rocket motor for a test. At the left, gases burning at 3,000 degrees centigrade shoot out of a tiny nozzle. The general view at the far left shows the sandbagged outdoor laboratory that is used by Parsons and his associate, Edward S. Forman

Popular Science, in its September 1940 issue, plays up Parsons, Malina and For man's explosive experiments in the Ar royo Seco. The magazine's caption mistakenly says that a Caltech photographer is Parsons, and neglects to mention the identity of a lone figure in a white shirt. He's John Parsons.



MEASURING KICK OF ROCKET GAS

While Forman operates controls that set off the charge in a rocket pointed at the ground, Parsons waits to take pictures of instruments recording the pressure created. Below, carbon lining of rocket motor

exhaust stream, moving the rocket back into line when it wanders ten degrees away from a vertical path.

But actually how close is rocket science to practical exploration of the stratosphere at an altitude of, say, fifty miles? Studies at the California Institute of Technology lead investigators to believe that with the exhaust velocity of 7,000 feet a second obtained by Goddard's rockets, powder rockets could now be built capable of rising 100,000 feet. In fact, under some conditions, they believe a gas-propelled, eighty-five pound rocket, exhausting its burned fuel through a nozzle at the rate of 12,000 feet a second, could rise under power to an altitude of fifty miles, and then continue, "coasting," straight up for another 175 miles.

For more than three decades scientists have sought ways to explore the atmosphere at great heights. Today their thoughts are turning to levels where rockets would fly through a vacuum, and celestial observations might be made without interference from city lights, haze, clouds, or air molecules of lower altitudes. One well-known astronomer even went so far as to suggest the possibility of a complete astronomical observatory, raised a thousand miles above the earth by one set of rocket motors, and maintained at that level by another.

Of more immediate practical application is the proposal that rockets take over the duties of heavy artillery in laying down a concentrated bombardment of an intensity not reached even with dive-bombing airplanes and the latest type of field and railway guns. Major James R. Randolph, of the U. S. Army Ordnance Reserve, recently declared that rockets could easily equal the performances of long-range guns firing shells as far as seventy miles.

These long-range cannon fire a projectile eight inches in diameter. "Instead of firing shots of moderate caliber at long intervals," said Major Randolph, "a rocket plant could fire the equivalent of twenty-four-inch shells as fast as desired."

Projectiles envisaged by this officer would weigh four tons. Thousands of them, set off simultaneously or in volleys, might lay down in a few minutes a withering barrage that present artillery could equal only over a long period of time.

Armor-piercing rockets, Randolph further proposed, could be carried by submarines, while on land, the rocket shells could be transported in ordinary motor trucks bearing no resemblance to artillery weapons now easily identified by enemy planes.

An essay in *Rapid Eye #3* entitled “Whence Came the Str anger” seems to document a definite r elationship betw een Heinlein and Parsons. In this essay, Adam Rostoker wrote, “Parsons and Heinlein were quite close friends . The y may have met at the Los Angeles Science Fiction Fan Club [Science Fantasy Society], which maintained a reading room . . . [They] were certainly seen there together.” In a footnote he related that Marjorie Cameron, Parsons’ second wife, was the source of this information: “Heinlein was the first person Parsons ever introduced her to. She didn’t care for Heinlein too much; he was ‘too slick, too Hollywood. But Jack and he were good friends.’” Adam Rostoker is the same “Adam Walks-Between-Worlds” of the Church of All Worlds which w as inspired by Heinlein’ s *Stranger in a Str ange Land*. He may have published a similar article in that or ganization’s *Green Egg* magazine.

Williamson documents science writer and member of the German Rocket Society Willy Le y’s occasional pr esence at meetings of the Mañana Literary Society, an informal science fiction discussion group which met at Heinlein’s house, so Parsons may have met his old correspondent there—assuming he was in fact a part of Heinlein’s circle.

Meanwhile, in \P arsons’ other life , the GALCIT group realized its first big success in August 1941. Parsons had come to realize that the rocket motors, now called jet-assisted tak e-offs (JATOs) to avoid the charged term “r ocket,” had to be used almost immediately , as the y could not be stor ed for long periods of time or in e xtremes of temperature. He and F orman w ould get up v ery early and pr epare the JATOs, nap a little, then meet the others at March Field. Von Kármán wrote, “He [P arsons] used a paper-lined c ylinder into which he pressed a black-po wder propellant of his o wn composition in one-inch layers.” In August, the group was ready to test Parsons’ JATOs on actual aircraft, the first time this type of rocket had ever been used.

The fuel used was called GALCIT-27, implying 26 failures before it. The airplane chosen was a hobby plane called the “Ercoupe,” chosen because it was small, light and har d to stall. The pilot w as Captain Homer A. Boushe y, Jr. of the Army Air Corps, a graduate student of von Kármán’ s. Also pr esent was another gr aduate student, Homer Joe Stewart, to whom was addressed a signed copy of Frank Malina’s memoirs in the possession of the JPL archives.

The GALCIT-27 event was recorded on color film, a cop y of which resides in the Libr ary of Congr ess. The silent original, along with some outtakes, is in the JPL archives. Both the original and the outtakes feature Parsons sporting a goatee and small mustache .

By this time Weld Arnold had been r eplaced as the gr oup's photographer by George Emerson, an Englishman, after whose arrival the quality of still photogr aphs improved dramatically. Emerson stayed with JPL for 40 years as the lab's chief photographer, while Weld went to New York and, in the 1950s, ended up on the Board of Trustees at the University of Nevada, where Malina found him. The tw o corresponded until Weld's death in 1961.

Parsons w as right about using the JATOs immediately, and, on August 6, 1941, one week after some nerv e-wracking static tests in which the JATOs " exploded like the F ourth" 12 of the r ockets were mounted under the wings of the Er coupe. The JATOs each deliv ered 28 pounds of thrust for 12 seconds—336 pounds thrust total. The group had never seen a plane climb so steeply The film clearly shows the plane le veling off immediately when the JATOs' fuel supply w as exhausted. The JATOs were a success, and Parsons was to credit.

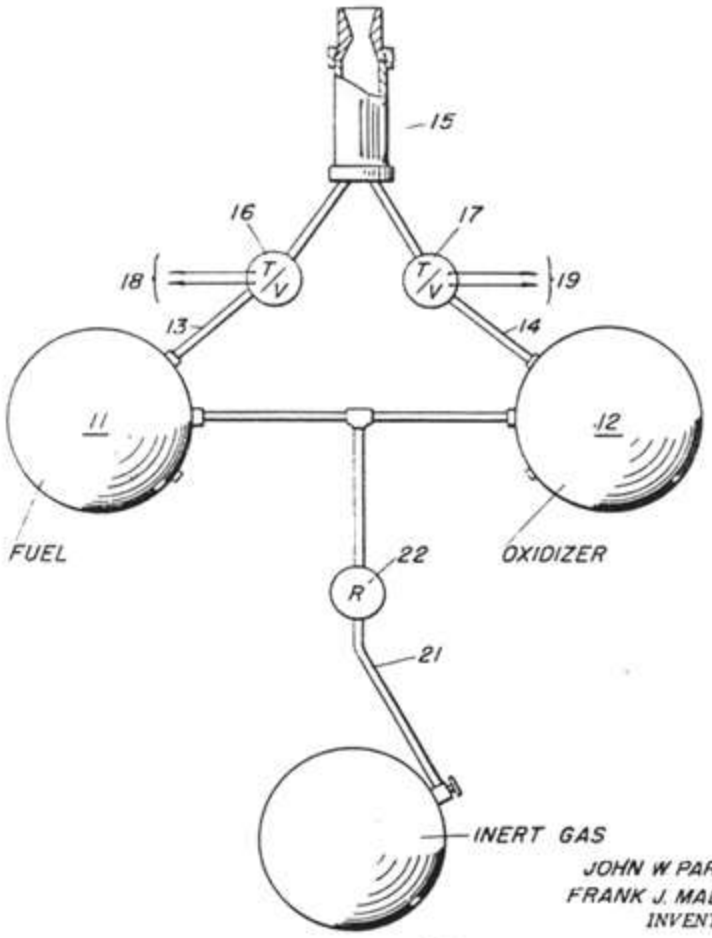
Some of the footage w as shot fr om the air , in Clark Millik an's small plane . The gr ound footage sho wing the Er coupe taking off alongside Millik an's plane r eveals quite dr amatically the differ ence the JATOs made: Takeoff distance was reduced over 30%. During one of the tests a nozzle shot off the end of a JATO, bounced off the runway, and tore a hole in the plane' s fuselage near the tail. " At least it wasn't a big hole ," one of the gr oup joked. Undaunted, the pilot Boushey continued flying. The tests also continued, running until August 12.

The JATOs were envisioned for use wher ever short run ways were constructed. If the Army Air Corps were in some remote locale with rough terrain or lots of tr ees, a short run way would save the labor and expense of a lot of men. The second use was for quick getaways in the air. If an enemy plane came up behind a pilot who had JATOs, the latter could ignite the r ockets and get out of the enem y's line of fire. Footage of this sort of maneuv er is also included in the A ugust 1941 film. Hap Arnold's original idea to utilize the JATOs to help overloaded aircraft take off was not a part of the

tests, though it was put to use during the w ar.

On August 23, the propeller was then removed from the Er coupe to demonstrate flight under rocket power only, the hole covered with three safety banners the group found at the site. One banner in particular amused them: “ Ask yourself: what about tomorr ow if I meet with an accident toda y?” To gain sufficient speed to get it off the ground, the Er coupe w as to wed b y a r ope connected to R udolph Schott’s r ed pickup truck. As the truck acceler ated to 25 mph, Boushey held the rope in his hand as long as he could, then dropped it and ignited the JATOs. It worked, and the success of the o verall Ercoupe flight test earned the gr oup a contr act with the Na vy. Parsons’ and Malina’s written report on the Ercoupe tests is in the JPL archives.

Three patents for liquid fuel discoveries wer e finally awarded Parsons and Malina a full two years after Parsons died.



JOHN W PARSONS
FRANK J. MALINA
INVENTOR.

BY D. Gordon Angus
ATTORNEY

United States Patent Office

2,693,077

Patented Nov. 2, 1954

2,693,077

REACTION MOTOR OPERABLE BY LIQUID PROPELLANTS AND METHOD OF OPERATING IT

Frank J. Malina and John W. Parsons, Pasadena, Calif., assignors, by mesne assignments, to Aerojet-General Corporation, Azusa, Calif., a corporation of Ohio

Original application May 8, 1943, Serial No. 486,236, now Patent No. 2,573,471, dated October 30, 1951. Divided and this application September 1, 1950, Serial No. 182,742

2 Claims. (Cl. 60—35.4)

Our invention relates to jet propulsion and more particularly to propellants which are useful in connection therewith.

This is a division of my copending application Serial No. 486,236, filed May 8, 1943, now U. S. Patent 2,573,471.

While our invention is capable of use in connection with the propulsion of a wide variety of different devices and vehicles, since it finds particular utility in the propulsion of aircraft, its advantages are described with relation to such use, it being understood that our invention is, however, not limited to such use.

Prior to our invention special means were always required to ignite the propellants. For example, when liquid oxygen is used as an oxidizer and gasoline is used as a fuel, some auxiliary ignition means must always be provided to initiate combustion of the propellants. This is objectionable because it requires either a spark plug or other ignitor or means for heating the walls of the combustion chamber above the ignition point of the propellant mixture making this system complex and dependent upon the operation of such ignition system.

While spontaneous combustion is obtained with our preferred combinations of propellants which is especially effective when operating in accordance with our preferred method it will be understood that the propellants we have discovered offer advantages even when operating under other conditions.

The present invention relates to fuels, and oxidizers and their combination as propellants and their method of injection into a jet motor. Among the objects of our invention are: to provide more efficient and effective propellants for jet propulsion systems; to provide an oxidizing agent which is easily combustible with a suitable fuel and which has a large amount of oxygen available for burning a fuel; to provide propellants, that is, fuels and oxidizers, which are spontaneously combustible; to provide a method for utilizing such propellants to give smooth combustion and to eliminate danger of explosion; to obviate the difficulties attendant upon the use of liquified gases; to eliminate the need of an auxiliary ignition system to ignite the propellants.

Oxidizers

As a result of a thorough investigation of the various oxidizing agents which may be used as propellants we prefer to employ nitric acid. Since water tends to retard combustion of the acid with any fuel, the nitric acid should be substantially free of water. Thus, white fuming nitric acid, which normally contains less than about 2% of water by weight, is to be preferred to weaker solutions of nitric acid. However, we have found that more dilute solutions of nitric acid may be utilized provided that nitrogen dioxide is dissolved in the nitric acid, which is a way of increasing the concentration of an otherwise more dilute solution. Preferably the nitric acid should contain at least about 5% NO_2 but preferably at least about 15 to 20% NO_2. Such a solution of nitrogen dioxide is known as red fuming nitric acid and almost all red fuming nitric acid which is commercially available in this country contains between about 5% and 20% nitrogen dioxide by weight and less than about 5% water by weight. Specifications for nitric acid, obtainable commercially as red fuming nitric acid, are as follows:

Chemical composition:	
HNO_3	90.5% by wt. min.
Water	2.5% by wt. max.
NO_2	7.25% by wt. max.—6.50% by wt. min.
Physical properties:	
Density	1.5 min.—1.55 max. @ 70° F.
Melting point	—50° F. max.
Color, etc	Orange to dark red—fumes vigorously when exposed to air.

Specifications for nitric acid, obtainable commercially as white fuming nitric acid, are as follows:

Chemical composition:	
Nitric acid	97.5% by wt. min.
Water	2.0% by wt. max.
NO_2 content	0.5% by wt. max.
Physical properties:	
Density	1.46 min.—1.52 max. @ 68° F.
Melting point	—45° F.
Color, etc	Straw yellow to water white; fumes vigorously when exposed to air.

The term "white fuming nitric acid" as used herein means a nitric acid containing a maximum of about 2% water by weight.

The term "red fuming nitric acid" as used herein means a nitric acid containing at least about 5% NO_2 and a maximum of about 5% water, by weight.

Nitric acid of all types containing at least 80% HNO_3 is useful as an oxidizer. We have also found that liquid nitrogen dioxide is a very satisfactory oxidizer.

To eliminate the requirement for providing the jet motor with special igniting means, we employ nitric acid, and preferably red fuming nitric acid, substantially free of water, as an oxidizer.

Fuels

We have discovered a family of fuels which are spontaneously combustible with the oxidizing agents hereinabove mentioned and which are satisfactory for jet propulsion provided that the propellants are supplied to the combustion chamber under suitable operating conditions. These operating conditions are discussed more in detail hereinbelow.

We have found that the four groups of compounds listed below may be utilized as fuels. These groups are listed in the order of their effectiveness.

Group I.—Liquid organic compounds containing at least one amine radical, such as,

A. Aniline, orthotoluidine, and methylamine.

B. Liquid hydrocarbons, containing large percentages of such amine substituted organic compounds.

Group II.—Highly unsaturated hydrocarbons: Liquid hydrocarbons of the acetylene type and containing a large fraction of unsaturated (double and triple) carbon bonds, or both, for example, divinyl acetylene, dipropargyl, and propargyl alcohol.

Group III.—Liquid substances containing the elements having the properties of lithium (Li), beryllium (Be), boron (B), aluminum (Al), magnesium (Mg), phosphorus (P), potassium (K), and sodium (Na). With the exception of phosphorus all of the foregoing elements are particularly useful in fuels because they generate large amounts of heat during combustion, and phosphorus is particularly useful because it has a low ignition temperature.

A. Liquid hydrides of those elements.

B. Liquid organo-metallic compounds containing one or more of such elements.

C. Liquid fuels containing one or more such elements.

D. Liquid fuels containing one or more such elements in suspension.

Group IV.—Organic compounds having the properties of:

1. Pyrole
2. Pyridine
3. Pinene
4. Terpene
5. Pinole
6. Terpinol
7. Hydrazine
8. Ozonides
9. Carbon disulphide containing phosphorus.

All the above identified substances are spontaneously combustible with the oxidizers hereinbefore discussed and are independently useful with other oxidizers where means for ignition is provided.

Of all of these fuels we prefer to employ the amine substituted hydrocarbons. Aniline, for example, not only has the advantage of being spontaneously combustible with the oxidizers hereinbefore mentioned but is less hazardous than gasoline in the presence of air. While aniline is toxic it has the great advantage of being relatively inexpensive, even though more expensive than gasoline, and of being commercially available in large quantities.

Method of operation

The above mentioned oxidizers and fuels may be used together as pairs of spontaneously combustible propellants at atmospheric temperature and pressure. However, if desired these oxidizers and fuels may be used with other fuels (such as gasoline) or other oxidizers (such as liquid oxygen) respectively.

So far as we know we are the first to achieve spontaneous combustion in jet propulsion systems at the temperature and pressure of the medium surrounding the jet motor and while other fuels and oxidizers might be utilized to accomplish such spontaneous combustion we prefer to use the fuels and oxidizers hereinbefore mentioned.

Certain difficulties are encountered when utilizing these propellants for propulsion. Unless the propellants are supplied to the jet motor under the proper conditions the motor is liable to fail completely, to pulsate in its operation, or to explode, even though the propellants are supplied at uniform rates.

These difficulties may be eliminated and certainly smoothness of operation secured by so relating the rates of injection of fuel and oxidizer to the size of the jet chamber and the inherent ignition properties of the mixture that explosion of the combustible mixture is avoided during the initial combustion, and subsequent injection occurs at rates conducive to the combustion of the continuously supplied propellants so as to avoid the accumulation in the jet chamber of any substantial amount of the unburned propellants. To achieve this result, we initially inject propellants into the combustion chamber at rates such that the amount of propellants injected prior to the initiation of combustion is less than about 20% of the volume of the combustion chamber.

After combustion has been initiated, the propellants may be injected at a greater rate than they are injected initially inasmuch as the time interval between their injection and combustion is reduced because of the higher temperature and pressure of the mixture resulting from prior combustion and the heating of the walls of the combustion chamber by the products of combustion.

In the drawing the figure shows a jet motor system including tanks and conduits for supplying propellants to the motor.

The fuels and oxidizers hereinbefore described are advantageously employed in the propulsion of an aircraft by providing the fuel and oxidizer in separate containers **11** and **12** respectively connected in any suitable manner as by pipes **13** and **14** to a jet or combustion chamber. Throttle valves **16** and **17** energized by electrical circuits **18** and **19** are provided in said pipes to control the rates of supply of the fuel and oxidizer respectively to the combustion chamber **15**. A receptacle **20** is connected by a conduit **21** having a pressure regulator **22** therein to the

receptacles **11** and **12** and is provided with a gas under pressure, preferably a gas inert with respect to either propellant. Preferably the container for the fuel and the container for the oxidizer are connected to a source of pressure adapted to force the contents of such containers into the jet or combustion chamber at controlled rates determined by the degree of opening of the valves in said pipes.

The practice of the method of our invention contemplates so relating the rates of injection of the oxidizer and of the fuel to the combustion or jet chamber to their inherent combustion properties and the size and temperature of the chamber that smooth non-explosive combustion occurs initially and throughout the entire operation while providing the desired quantity of propulsive power. Our invention is particularly advantageous when the combustion chamber is initially at atmospheric temperature, or at the temperature of any other medium in which the motor is to operate, as we are able to achieve combustion initially without auxiliary ignition or preheating of the chamber or the propellants.

If the propellants are supplied at such initial rates, then, when the propellants are initially injected into the jet motor, the initially burned propellants soon fill the combustion chamber with high temperature gases and vapors which heat the incoming propellants thereby vaporizing them and reducing the ignition time lag. Then the subsequently injected propellants burn spontaneously without any substantial accumulation of propellants in the liquid phase.

As an example, applied to a combustion chamber having a length of about 10 inches and a cross sectional area of about 7 square inches, highly concentrated nitric acid and aniline operate very satisfactorily when they are injected into the combustion chamber initially and prior to combustion at the rates of 3.6 lbs. per second and 2.4 lbs. per second respectively.

While these propellants and method of use and the apparatus for their use in propelling aircraft or other devices, which are hereinbefore described, are fully capable of providing the advantages primarily stated, it will be recognized by those skilled in the art that various modifications and alterations may be made therein while still providing such advantages, and our invention is therefore to be understood as not limited to the specific embodiments hereinbefore described but as including all modifications and variations thereof coming within the scope of the claims which follow.

We claim as our invention:

1. The method of developing thrust which comprises ejecting from a reaction chamber the gaseous products produced by the spontaneous combustion of a compound selected from the group consisting of hydrazine and carbon disulphide containing phosphorus, and acid selected from the group consisting of red fuming nitric acid and white fuming nitric acid.

2. The method of developing thrust which comprises ejecting from a reaction chamber the gaseous products produced by the spontaneous combustion of hydrazine and acid from the group consisting of red fuming nitric acid and white fuming nitric acid.

References Cited in the file of this patent

UNITED STATES PATENTS

Number	Name	Date
2,573,471	Malina et al.	Oct. 30, 1951

FOREIGN PATENTS

Number	Country	Date
405,645	Great Britain	Jan. 29, 1934
576,227	Great Britain	Dec. 3, 1937

OTHER REFERENCES

Mellor: "A Comprehensive Treatise on Inorganic and Theoretical Chemistry," vol. VIII, page 313. Pub. 1928 by Longmans, Green & Co., New York and London. Copy in Division 59.

An oft-r eproduced photo fr om the Er coupe tests hints at the change in relationship between Parsons and Malina. V on Kármán is shown writing on the wing of the Er coupe (suggesting the shot w as staged), while Cly de

Miller , Clark Millik an, Martin Summerfield, Frank Malina, and Homer Boushe y look on. This photo is usually referred to as the “technical group.” Why was Summerfield there? His specialty was liquid-fuel rockets, and this w as a solid fuel test. And where was Parsons? He was always referred to as the “theor etician,” with Forman being the mechanic. Parsons is in a separate photo, with the “flight test cr ew”: Fred Miller (an “ explosives technician”), Ed Forman, Malina, Boushey, and a couple of Air Force mechanics. If the technical crew photo had been a candid photo r ather than a publicity photo, Parsons would have appeared; Summerfield would not. A large group photo from the same tests includes Helen Parsons, John’s first wife. (See photo section.)

It is r eported that patents e xist in P arsons’ name on solid-fuel JATOs and that he shar es them with Mark M. Mills , one of his assistants. Frank Malina wrote that only P arsons would have thought of abandoning black po wder and smok eless po wder for mor e e xotic solid fuels, which w as way out of Malina’ s and Hsue-shen T sien’s league. It w as also P arsons’ idea to pour in one-inch thick la yers, from the bottom up, to contr ol the burn rate, a process that had not been done before.

It has been said that P arsons held a total of se ven patents altogether, but the thr ee I was able to find w ere for liquid-fuel r ockets, not solid. On displa y in the Smithsonian Institution’ s National Air and Space Museum in W ashington, D.C., is a specimen of an early solid-fuel JATO. The unit’ s spark plug is not for ignition but for an insulated pathw ay into the fuel mixtur e; r ather than going to the expense of constructing something ne w, the gr oup just had F orman drill and thr ead a hole the size of a spark plug into the end of the JATO. The plug already had a built-in porcelain insulator surrounding the conductor, and wires were attached to either end of it, so electricity could be directed safely inside the casing to ignite the mixture.

In early November 1941 one of their “bo ys,” as Malina put it, got drunk and stole a car at gunpoint fr om a young couple:

He was a mechanic working with Jack, and it seems that he had gone to Parsons’ house. They’d had a seance—what they wer e doing I don’t know—anyway [he] had a gun and he found a car on the street that was parked nearby. There was a couple necking in it. He forced them out at the point of

the gun, took the car , drove to Hollywood, evidently not quite knowing what he was going to do. And then, after a cer tain amount of time, he dr ove back to Pasadena. When he ar rived at the flagpole by the Colorado [A ve.] bridge, the police were waiting for him.

Malina continued:

I went to the jail to talk to the fellow and asked him what exactly made him do a stupid thing like that. Well, he was very vague and I couldn't get anything out of Parsons or Forman as to why this had happened . . . It then became quite evident that whatever it was that Parsons and Forman were playing with had certain worrisome aspects.

Hypnosis, perhaps? F orman never did join the A gape Lodge, but Parsons and he w ere v ery close and ma y easily ha ve been sharing Parsons' occult endeavors. The individual was released into Malina's custody, and the whole incident w as kept quiet, simply because of the work going on at the school. W ar was imminent (the attack on Pearl Harbor was only a month away); there was no need to disrupt Caltech's work with an embarrassing detail like this.

Meanwhile, at the lodge Parsons was becoming increasingly influ-ential. In March of 1942, Jane Wolfe wrote to Crowley:

I believe Jack Parsons—who is devoted to Wilfr ed [Smith]—to be the coming leader, with Wilfred in advisory capacity. I hope you two get together some day, although your present activities in England seem to have postponed the date of your coming to us [which never happened]. Jack, by the way , comes in thr ough some inner experiences, but mostly , perhaps, through the world of science. That is, he was "sold on the Book of the Law" because it for etold Einstein, Heisenberg—whose work is not permitted in Russia—the quantum field folks, whose work is along the "factor infinite and unknown" lines [see *Liber 49*, v. 36], etc. Y ou two would have a whale of a lot to talk over. He and Helen are lock, stock and barrel for the Order.r.

That same year, Parsons also made an intuitive leap that changed the future of rocket motor technology. There are apocryphal stories concerning the inspir ation for his idea, but P arsons seems to ha ve taken the truth with him to the gr ave. 40 years later Homer Boushey told an International Association of A eronautics and Astr onautics (IAAA) group in Oslo that the idea had

come to Parsons while watching some r oofers apply hot asphalt. F rank Malina said that P arsons knew of “Gr eek Fire,” a mixture of pitch and other elements which the ancient Greeks used as flaming projectiles, hurling them at enemy ships during w ars. However, Helen P arsons told an intervie wer the idea had originated with her.

As early as 1928, Parsons and Forman had used glue as a binder to hold their black powder and aluminum oxide in their little rocket motors. In 1942 P arsons had the idea to use liquid asphalt for this purpose. The asphalt w as heated, then the fuel and the o xidizer were mixed in, and the mixture was poured directly into the casing rather than an intermediate molding and allo wed to cool. Dubbed GALCIT-53, the mixture did not shrink and cr ack as had earlier mixtures. [17] The new JATOs could be stored indefinitely, at either extreme of temperature, without the threat of explosion during use—and they could now be mass-pr oduced. After Parsons left Aerojet, it was discovered that a hollow could be created in the center of the hardened fuel to provide increased surface area and thus an increased burning rate. At first they used a simple c ylindrical shape, then later a star shape to further increase the surface area. This method was used in the Minuteman and Polaris missiles.

Mark M. Mills and F red S. Miller assisted P arsons with his w ork on the GALCIT-53 JATOs, which delivered 2 00 pounds of thrust for eight seconds —a 476% impr ovement o ver GALCIT-27. P arsons invented the method of pouring the heated, liquefied pr opellant, which involved priming the empty casing fir st with a little bit of the liquefied solution, letting it cool just enough to start to har den, and then pouring the r emainder of the fuel inside . This method is still used today on the solid fuel booster s used on the Space Shuttle.

Parsons also had the equally monumental idea to start using potassium perchlorate as an o xidizer, instead of aluminum and others. Successful v ariations on this idea included use of ammonium perchlorate for the same purpose. Potassium perchlorate was actually listed in the paper P arsons wrote at Antelope V alley for Halifax in 1937, but he did not comment on its potential at the time . What brought him back to it in 1942 is unkno wn.

These br eakthroughs led to the formation of the A erojet Corporation on March 19, 1942, now one of the world’s largest manufacturers of r ockets.

The founder s w ere v on Kármán, Malina, Summerfield, Parsons, Forman, and v on Kármán's attorney Andrew Haley. Parsons and F orman had the idea to get a sponsor or form a corporation; Malina w as the one who pr oposed the idea to v on Kármán. Each put in $2 00, though Haley actually loaned all but v on Kármán their share. Haley ended up putting in $2500, with the understanding that the others would pay him back later. The five assigned all future patents to the compan y, and Malina and Hale y came up with the name A erojet. Parsons and Forman immediately left GALCIT for Aerojet. The group still worked on projects together, with Aerojet employees selling their services as consultants to GALCIT. The company grew quickly.

Haley seems to have been a hands-on kind of guy, as his interesting book, *Rocketry and Space Exploration*, contains several photos of him working directly with various manufacturing efforts at A erojet. Often he worked in the office by day and in the plant by night.

The group's next big success w as with liquid JATOs. Parsons was still trying to find a w ay to use r ed fuming nitric acid (RFNA) as an oxidizer with fuels such as gasoline and benzene . RFNA was the chemical that had caused the lar ge e xplosion—and the big mess—when the Suicide Squad w as just getting started at Caltech. Curr ent tests resulted in motor s that burned but pr oduced uneven burning which led to thr obbing, caused b y late ignition: The fuel did not begin burning immediately on contact with RFNA. Martin Summerfield's "instability of burning" la w is still used to describe this phenomenon.

On a trip east, an acquaintance of Malina' s suggested using aniline to help control the burn rate of the mixture and reduce the throbbing. On the tr ain ride home , Malina suddenly r ealized that RFNA and aniline ought to be self-igniting without the gasoline or benzene. He wired Summerfield back in P asadena, who arr anged a test with engineer Walter Powell and others. The event was recorded on film: a small crucible sits on the ground, while a hand reaches in, holding a long pole at the end of which is another small crucible . When the contents of one w ere poured into the other, the mixtur e did indeed ignite into a huge flame, and the group was on their way to the perfection of liquid-fuel rockets.

With the help of attorne y D. Gordon Angus, Parsons and Malina filed thr

ee patents on Ma y 8, 1943 for v arious elements of this process. Parsons' name is on these patents because he insisted on working with RFNA despite what other s said about the fuel, a fact documented by Malina in his or al histories with JPL. Ironically, two of the thr ee patents w ere not gr anted until after P arsons' death in 1952. The patent number s are 2,573,471 ("Reaction Motor Operable by Liquid Propellants and Method of Operating It," patented October 30, 195 1); 2,693,0 77 (a division of patent 2,573,47 1, patented November 2, 1954, but with seemingly little if any difference from the first patent); and 2,774,2 14 ("R ocket Propulsion Method," patented December 18, 1956, which is basically the same pr oposal submitted under a different category).

The group's acid-aniline mix was used as late as the Titan missile, at which time it was abandoned in favor of liquid oxygen, which had had finally been made manageable . [In an odd " coincidence," the Great Beast Aleister Crowley referred to himself as "Teitan," which is the original Greek spelling of "Titan," because it adds to 666 in Greek *gematria*, a form of numerology.]

The flight test of the new liquid fuel occurred on April 15, 1942 at Muroc Field in Antelope Valley, site of today's Edwards Air Force Base. Liquid JATOs were the first Aerojet project. A Douglas A-20A was flown first to the Burbank airport for pr eparations, then to the test field for the liquid JATO tests. The plane weighed 20,000 pounds, as much as several Ercoupes combined. Major P aul H. Dane of the Arm y Air Corps was the test pilot. Be verly F orman, Ed' s cousin, sat in back of the plane. His job was to release the fuel mixture at the appropriate time. Two 1000-pound thrust JATOs were mounted under the A-20A's wings, each with a 25-second burn time. They were designed by Summerfield with the assistance of Walter B. Powell and Edward G. Croft, and had five times the power of GALCIT-53, although solid fuel maintained its value.

A long, silent color film (thr ee reels) exists of this e vent as well, located in the Library of Congress, as well as in the JPL archives. One excellent shot shows von Kármán, Malina, and Parsons walking side-by-side down the runway, discussing some issue about the tests: the three men who made r ocketry viable—the gr eat man, v on Kármán, on one side, his protégé Malina in the middle, acting as go-between, and the man of the w orld, John P arsons, on the other side . These same three men later appear ed in the same

or der on v on Kármán's list of the top 1 0 people who had made American r ocketry a possibility, occupying the first three positions.

Take-off distance was again reduced in excess of 30%. At the end of the tests, Malina said, "We now have something that really works and w e should be able to help giv e the Fascists hell!" V on Kármán called the de velopment "the beginning of pr actical r ocketry in the United States ." The success of the A20-A test earned the gr oup another budget increase—from $125,000 in 1942 to several times that amount for the coming year, an incredible amount for the w ork of a few men. However, it was only one area into which the military was channeling lar ge amounts of mone y in pr eparation for the w ar. Designated XLR-1-AJ-1, over 1 00 slightly modified liquid JATO units were sold by Aerojet for use on Boeing B36 bombers during the w ar. Smaller units were also used to help launch Corsairs from aircraft carriers; it is unclear whether they used liquid or solid fuel.

Observing the tests w as Alfred Loedding, sent b y the Arm y Air Corps from Wright Field. Loedding's later claim to fame w as as the military's first UFO investigator in 1947: he started Project Sign, which sought to explain away all UFO reports and was the precursor to the Air Force's better-known Project Blue Book.

At Aerojet P arsons mostly w orked in solid fuels and w as the Project Engineer in charge of the Solid Fuels Department, although he wasn't actually a degreed engineer. Forman supervised the mechanics' shop and often went to the *arroyo* at GALCIT to perform static tests of his improved motors. Malina was working mostly with liquids at this time, which was his friend Summerfield' s specialty. When he would visit the *arroyo* for tests, he would work out of his car.

Aerojet's first contract was for a solid JATO for the Navy Bureau of Aeronautics, and their second w as a liquid JATO for the Air craft Laboratory at Wright Field that was used on the Douglas Havoc Attack Bomber. The original Aerojet offices were located on E. Colorado Ave. in Pasadena, but they soon moved to 285 W. Colorado Ave., the site of a former juice v endor. T est and pr oduction facilities mo ved to Azusa the following year, about 40 miles east of Los Angeles . A picture of the gr oundbreaking appear s in Hale y's *Rocketry and Space Exploration*. The Defense Plan Corporation paid

$149,000 to build the plant after some of von Kármán's friends in Washington got involved. Aerojet's thir d contr act w as with the Air F orce, which committed $256,000 for solid-fuel JATOs.

The ne w w ork at A erojet pr ovided plenty of opportunity for evening and weekend work, and uncompensated overtime was a fact of life. The e xpanded gr oup became r ather close as a r esult; sack lunches were shared under a lar ge oak tr ee. There was also a little tension. One time a mechanic cut off Malina' s tie during a visit from Caltech by the latter, because he thought the tie w as too formal.

One of the pr oject's engineers from A erojet, Walt P owell, had a glider he liked to fly, as it helped him r elieve some of the str ess. He did this so often that it became a distr action to the group, so Malina took it away and had it locked up. Powell chased Malina with an ax when he discovered what had happened.

GALCIT lost many young men to the draft. Project No. 1, however, the official rocket project at Caltech, had a top priority; thus, its men were exempt. The project in the *arroyo* rated further down the scale. Aerojet had the same pr oblem, at the same time it w as trying to expand to meet the new demand for its product. Hap Arnold himself had to intervene when Andrew Haley was drafted. Haley was back to Aerojet within a w eek, where he replaced von Kármán as the company's president, and w orked hard, demanding that his emplo yees work even harder. They often took pa y cuts when he felt the company couldn't afford the payroll. Haley went on to become president of the International Aeronautical Federation. He traveled widely, and his book is full of pictures of himself with dignitaries like the Pope.

Newcomers to Aerojet were often shocked by the uneducated and inexperienced staff the compan y had to hir e just to ha ve some bodies around to do the work. A company photo taken when Aerojet was only one year old shows well over 100 people. Experienced engineers were not interested in rockets, so they had to rely on young inexperienced engineer s fr esh out of college . Von Kármán later said this arrangement worked out to their adv antage, as the y didn't ha ve to untrain an ybody. Amo Smith came back fr om Douglas Air craft to work at Aerojet with his old classmates, and

Fritz Zwicky also joined the company. Zwicky later designed the e xperimental “terr apulse” vehicle, which w as intended for drilling deep into the earth to ward its center. To my knowledge, it was never built.

Zwicky claimed that when Aerojet first was able to purchase some nitromethane, Parsons stole it and r an some of his o wn tests on it right ther e on A erojet gr ounds. Zwicky also claimed that P arsons used to talk all sorts of occult doctrine with the Aerojet secretaries in order to get them into bed. Appar ently, it worked, although Parsons was considered a handsome enough guy that he didn’t need much “smooth talk.”

Unwilling to pass up an y lead, Parsons was sent to Ne w York in May of 1942 to observe the work of a man named Ma ynor, who had written Caltech to tell them about his own rocket project. A two-page handwritten note on file in the JPL archives written b y Parsons to Malina from the Hotel Go vernor Clinton, New York City, on May 5, describes the situation. Ma ynor’s liquid fuel r ocket was unsatisfactory mechanically, to say the least, and his pr ocedures were unsafe. Parsons told Malina that Maynor endangered himself and the spectators. Maynor claimed 1000 pounds of thrust had been generated, but Parsons found his measuring appar atus and r ecordkeeping pr ocedures questionable. Ma ynor told P arsons that he held six “secr et” patents. Nonetheless, there was nothing further w orth investigating here. The second page of P arsons’ note includes a fe w hand-drawn sketches of Maynor’s setup.

In a two-page letter to Frank Malina in May 1942, John Parsons describes the stunning indequacies of another rocket project he was sent to New York City to check out.

HOTEL GOVERNOR CLINTON
IN THE PENN ZONE
SEVENTH AVENUE AT 31ST STREET
OPPOSITE PENNSYLVANIA R.R. TERMINAL
BALTIMORE & OHIO MOTOR COACHES STOP AT DOOR
NEW YORK CITY

CABLE ADDRESS "GOVCLINTON" N.Y.
TELEPHONE: PENNSYLVANIA 6-3400

May 5 42

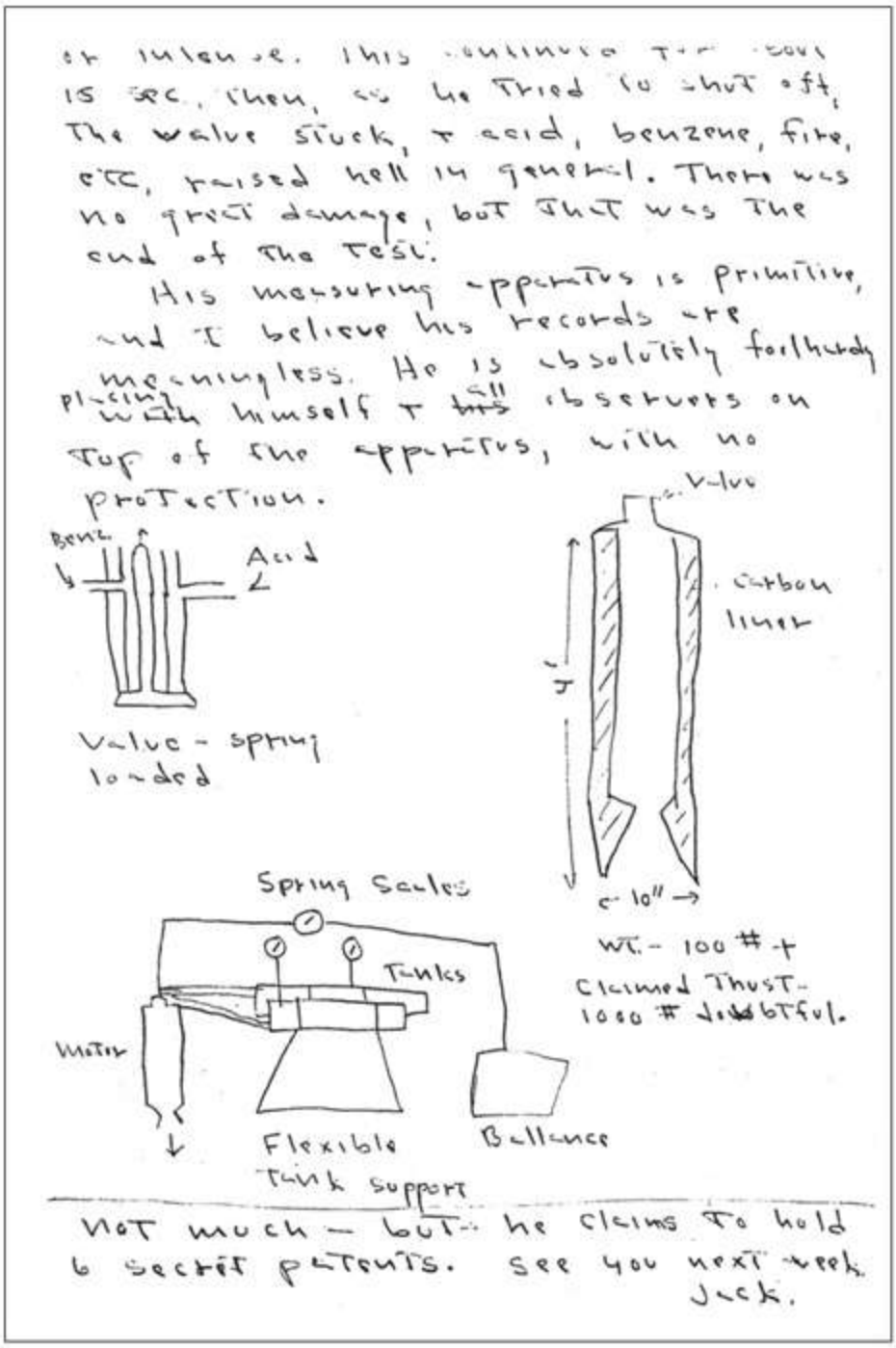
Dear Frank.

Yesterday I witnessed one of Maynard Tests.

His apparatus is crude & he works under considerable disadvantage, but his motor worked after a fashion. While everything is fresh in my mind I will try to describe. Drawing on back.

At the start, his valves were leaking, & there was a considerable fume. He set inspection at 60 #, & opened his valve slightly. Ignition was quiet and immediate, with a cloud of acid & a slight flame. As he opened up, the acid cleared & the flame increased. There was nowhere near the noise of ours, & the jet was not as concentrated

1200 ROOMS WITH BATH, SERVIDOR, RADIO, CIRCULATING ICE WATER
TWO DELIGHTFUL RESTAURANTS AND COFFEE SHOP SPACIOUS SAMPLE ROOMS



On A ugust 3 0, 1942, P arsons and Mark M. Mills submitted “Progress R eport on the De velopment of 2 00-lb.-Thrust Solid-Propellant Jet Units for the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Progress Report No. 1-1.” Multiple 2 00-pound units were to be used together for a single tak e-off. Despite the fact that P arsons was at Aerojet at this time , this r eport is on file

in the JPL archives. On October 16, 1942, Parsons and Mills submitted “The Development of an Asphalt-Base Solid Pr opellant, Report No. 1-15.” The photo of Parsons in a trench coat was taken around this time, on the occasion of a return to the *arroyo* from Aerojet for some tests. The photo may have been for the 2 00-pound units in the A ugust report, or it ma y have been at the new Aerojet site in Azusa. (See photo section.)

After Parsons and F orman went to A erojet, GALCIT’s next project was a rocket car. Malina and Summerfield had r eceived a military contract to test the “Hy drobomb,” which w as a euphemistically-named torpedo. In or der to test the h ydrodynamic properties of the Hydrobomb, the gr oup constructed a 5 00-foot long “to wing channel”—basically a long, shallow pit of water. The rocket car was built on a track above the pit, and the Hy drobomb was mounted on the underside of the rocket car, with liquid JATOs used to propel it 500 feet at 40 mph, a speed compar able to what it w ould experience underwater. Pressure gauges were mounted to the Hy drobomb to measure the effects of its motion thr ough the w ater. Humor ously, the tr ack ended right at the project director’s home.

The project had problems, however, caused by acoustic instabilities in the design of the JATOs. Acoustics was a y et-to-be-discovered field and thus w as not r ecognized as the pr oblem. The r ocket car finally self-destructed in a huge blaze during one of the tests, and the project was abandoned. The dr amatic demise of the r ocket car w as captured on color film. In 1942, author William A.H. White , who wrote science fiction as Anthon y Boucher and m ysteries as H.H. Holmes (the name of an infamous Chicago mur derer), penned and had published a cr ossover mur der m ystery/science fiction no vel about the rocket car called *Rocket to the Morgue*. It was written and published in 1942, and later reprinted under White’s “Boucher” pseudonym. The novel clearly portrays John Parsons as one of the main characters. White later founded and edited *The Magazine of Science Fiction and Fantasy*, as w ell as writing se veral stories and no vels in both genres. He w as popular science fiction writer Philip K. Dick’ s editor for years.

In *Rocket to the Morgue*, Parsons is the character Hugo Chantrelle, to whom White often simply refers as “the goatee.” Ed Forman is his assistant “Gribble ,” and R obert Heinlein is “ Austin Carter.” Science fiction writer and future founder of the Church of Scientology L. Ron Hubbard is “D. V

ance Wimple ,” while John W . Campbell is “Don Stewart,” and Jack Williamson is “Joe Hender son.” In the “Afterword” of the 195 1 edition, White sa ys that Heinlein’ s Mañana Literary Society “existed in fact precisely as it is depicted in this book . . . I’v e managed to captur e a moment that has some inter est as a historical footnote to popular cultur e. This is the w ay it w as in Southern California just befor e the w ar, when science fiction w as being given its present form.” Because of this assertion, we must pay close attention to the fact that A ustin Carter (Heinlein) and Hugo Chantrelle (Parsons) spend a lot of time together in the book, including some meetings at the former’s house. And it should also be noted that the book was written a few years before Parsons actually met L. Ron Hubbard.

White described Chantrelle as:

[A]n eccentric scientist. In working hours at the California Institute of Technology he was an uninspired routine laboratory man; but on his own time he devoted himself to those peripheral aspects of science which the scientific purist damns as mumbo-jumbo, those new alchemies and astrologies out of which the race may in time construct unsurmised wonders of chemistry and astronomy.

The rocketry of Pendray, the time-dreams of Dunne, the extra sensory perception of Rhine, the sea serpents of Gould, all these held his interests far more than any research conducted by the Institute. He was inevitably a member of the For tean Society of America, and had his own file of unbelievable incidents eventually to be published as a supplement to the works of Charles For t. It must be added in his favor that his scientific training automatically preserved him from the errors of the Master [For t]. His file was car efully authenticated, and often embellished with first-hand reports.

The entire book is worth reading for nothing else than the characterization of P arsons as Chantr elle. While it is obviously a liter ary portrayal rather than a biographical sketch, *Rocket to the Morgue* certainly depicts the author’ s impression of Parsons. White’s statement about Parsons being a member of the F ortean Society, for instance, may not be factual, but certainly P arsons w as inter ested in “Forteana,” the bizarre scientific anomalies found ar ound the globe for millennia and chronicled by the indefatigable Fort.

White’s reference to “the time-dreams of Dunne” was repeated elsewhere in the book and concerns J.W . Dunne’ s *An Experiment With Time*, an odd little v olume first published in 1927. Dunne’ s hypothesis, which he supports with lengthy descriptions of his own dreams, is that dreams may often foretell future events. He goes to gr eat lengths to support this with a philosophical discussion of the natur e of time. Austin Carter (Heinlein) w as also quite inter ested in Dunne’ s book, according to White’s dramatization, in which Chantrelle spends much of the time describing his pr emonitions of the mur der and other ominous events, brought on by his “Extr a Sensory Perception,” which he repeats often, or his equally mystical “awareness of past phases of seriotemporal existence.”

Chantrelle mentions *Starmaker* author Olaf Stapleton as w ell as Fowler F oulkes as tw o science fiction writer s who had impr essed him, possibly favorites of Parsons’ as well.[18] Chantrelle also says that “one of the greatest services science fiction can render to science” is to lead the public gr adually into accepting implausible concepts as fantastic, evidently referring to Parsons’ public acceptance of his own rockets, if this was indeed a comment of his.

White’s account of the rocket car is a bit garbled, but the incidental material he documents surr ounding the science fiction writer s in Southern California at the time is inv aluable to any historian. Based on his description, it is clear he never visited GALCIT to witness a test of the rocket car, nor did he seem to under stand exactly how it was configured. He does make it an interesting plot device, however: it is the mur der w eapon. P erhaps he hear d of the r ocket car pr oject directly from Parsons, though Parsons’ involvement (if any) with the project was incidental, possibly exaggerated by him, or he may have been ther e in some less-than-official capacity . A ccording to Alv a Rogers, White/Boucher visited Parsons’ house frequently enough to get much of his material from Parsons himself.

It is appr opriate that P arsons w as fascinated b y and inv olved in not only rocket science but also science fiction, since the latter is an inspiration for the former, providing ideas about where humanity and the future are headed that can be acted upon and brought to fruition. Science fiction and fantas y also bridge the tw o seemingly dispar ate worlds that P arsons occupied, i.e ., the

aer ospace industry and the occult. The combination is not so strange, however, as numerous scientists, engineers, researchers and other professionals also have had spiritual and religious lives. What is surprising to the average person, however, is that P arsons was apparently so unorthodo x and r ebellious, but this “delightful scr ewball,” as von Kármán called Parsons, was never content with the conventional, ordinary and mundane. In both sides of his double life, he would always shoot for the moon.

five

The Return to South Orange Grove Ave.: 1942-1945

On June 26, 1942, John and Helen Parsons moved from 168 S. Terrace Drive into the old Arthur Fleming mansion at 1 003 S. Or ange Gr ove A ve., just blocks fr om where he had gr own up at 537 S. Or ange Gr ove A ve. Fleming Mansion was an expensive and exclusive part of Pasadena, called, as noted, “Millionair e’s Mile ,” with palm tr ees lining the str eets and flowering magnolias adorning the y ards. Ther e was also a smaller coach house on the grounds, at 10031/2 S. Orange Grove Ave., where Wilfred Smith lived. Life in P asadena in the early ’40s is accur ately portrayed in James Cain’s novel *Mildred Pierce*, which was made into the film starring Joan Cr awford.

According to writer Iris Chang, Parsons had a mannequin dressed in a tuxedo on his front porch, upon which he placed a sign sa ying, “The Resident.” Next to the mannequin w as a bucket for the mail-man to place all mail so addressed.

Built by its namesake out of r edwood around the turn of the century, the house was modeled after the Norwegian homes of the time.[19] There were 10 bedrooms on three floors in the main house, with several mor e bedr ooms in the coach house behind it. A small domed portico supported b y six concr ete columns stood in the backy ard. Parsons converted the estate buildings into appr oximately 19 apartments. The house w as razed in the late 1940s to mak e room for an apartment complex.

Fleming, the original owner of the mansion, was a noted philanthropist and Nobel Prize winner who had made a good deal of money in the Canadian logging industry . He had donated o ver $5 million to Caltech alone and w as the Chairman of its Boar d of Directors. He also owned what would become Yosemite after he sold the acreage to the government at half-price for the purpose of establishing a park, r ather than selling out to commer cial interests who were vying for the land.

Fleming had arriv ed in P asadena decades earlier , soon after which his wife died. Fleming himself died on A ugust 11, 1940, and the big old house stood v acant until an attorne y named John M. Dean and his wife Dorothy bought the place in 1942. Parsons leased the house fr om Dean, and the A gape Lodge r elocated to “the Parsonage,” as it came to be called. Dean does not sho w up on the membership rosters from that period, but he must ha ve been privy and sympathetic to the lodge’s activities, as he and his wife resided in the house along with P arsons and the other s, according to the 1947 city directory.

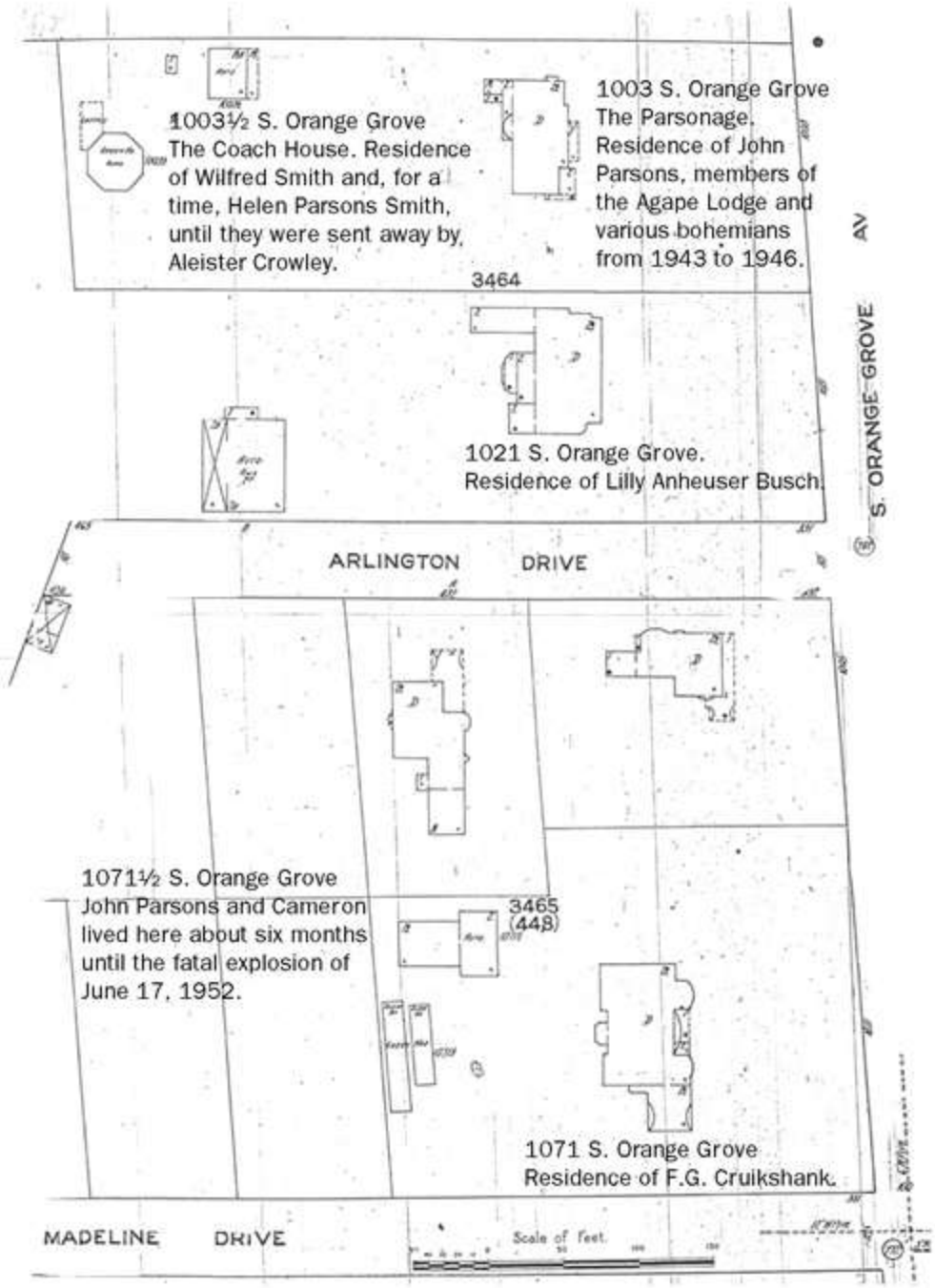
Parsons’ bedroom upstairs, which was the largest room, doubled as a temple. There was the obligatory copy (handcrafted) of the Stele of Revealing, an Egyptian tablet that had inspired Crowley during his trip in 1904 to Cairo, where it was object number 666 in the Museum of Antiquities.[20] Crowley’s translation of the stele appears in *Liber AL*, a section of which, AL III:10, requires a copy for ritual purposes. The Parsonage also contained a beautiful libr ary with w ood paneling, a large signed portrait of Crowley, hundreds of books on occult matters, and the numerous letters exchanged between Crowley and Parsons. The living r oom contained an e xpensive, modern hi-fi system—Parsons loved to play classical music at very high volume.

Parsons lived next to the estate of the late Lilly Anheuser Busch, widow of brewer Adolphus Busch, and the house backed up onto the famous Busch Sunk en Gardens, which w ere beautiful and huge , at least 34 acres in size, by early accounts. By Parsons’ time there were 11 acres left, which is still quite sizable for a well-maintained park in a residential area. One photo of Lilly shows her painting a landscape scene in the gar dens, surr ounded b y concr ete y ard gnomes . Her estate was also the site of public Easter egg hunts for the city’ s children. The city briefly considered making the gardens into a park after her death, but the land was sold and subdivided in the late 195 0s.

Parsons shocked his conservative neighbors when he started renting out r ooms to less-than-desir able tenants. The fr equent visitors, noisy parties, and questionable goings-on raised many eyebrows. One visitor wrote that “tw o women in diaphanous go wns would dance around a pot of fir e, surrounded

by coffins topped with candles . . . all I could think at the time was that if those robes caught on fire the whole house w ould go up lik e a tinderbo x." He also said that an opera singer and several astrologers lived in the house. It is amusing to ponder the contrast to the previous owner's habits and what Lilly Busch and her friends thought about all this.

Fire insurance map of Parsons' Pasadena residences.


1003½ S. Orange Grove
The Coach House. Residence of Wilfred Smith and, for a time, Helen Parsons Smith, until they were sent away by, Aleister Crowley.
1003 S. Orange Grove
The Parsonage. Residence of John Parsons, members of the Agape Lodge and various bohemians from 1943 to 1946.
3464
1021 S. Orange Grove.
Residence of Lilly Anheuser Busch.
S. ORANGE GROVE AV
ARLINGTON DRIVE
1071½ S. Orange Grove
John Parsons and Cameron lived here about six months until the fatal explosion of June 17, 1952.
3465
(448)
1071 S. Orange Grove
Residence of F.G. Cruikshank.
MADELINE DRIVE
Scale of Feet.

One of the longtime r esidents of the Parsonage was Alva Rogers, who became associated with the house after attending se veral science fiction meetings there. During these meetings Rogers soon fell in love with a young artist who roomed there, and visited whenever he could, prior to mo ving in. In a 1962 fanzine article entitled “Darkhouse,” Rogers wrote:

In the ads placed in the local paper Jack specified that only bohemians, ar tists, musicians, atheists, anar chists, or other exotic types need apply for r ooms—any mundane soul would be unceremoniously rejected. This ad, needless to say, caused quite a flap in Pasadena when it appear ed . . .

There was a fine selection of hand-picked tenants, characters all. A few examples: The pr ofessional fortune teller and seer who always wore appropriate dr esses and decorated her apar tment with symbols and artifacts of arcane lore; a lady, well past middle-age but still strikingly beautiful, who claimed to have been at various times the mistress of half the famous men in France; a man who had been a r enowned organist for most of the gr eat movie palaces of the silent era. [21]

Jack's library (a lar ge wood paneled r oom graced with a comfortable leather couch and a couple of leather chairs) was lined with books devoted almost exclusively to the occult, and to the published works of Aleister Cr owley. Dominating the r oom was a large photo-portrait of Crowley affectionately inscribed to Jack. He also had a voluminous correspondence with Crowley in the library, some of which he showed me. I r emember in particular one letter from Crowley which praised and encouraged him for the fine work he was doing in America, and also casually thanked him for his latest donation and intimated that mor e would be shor tly needed. Jack admitted that he was one of Cowley's main sources of money in America.

The financial arr angements R ogers mentioned w ere as follo ws: Parsons would forward the money to Karl Germer in New York, who would send it on to Cr owley in England. Germer (January 22, 1885-October 25, 1962) was known in the OTO as "Frater Saturnus." These financial arrangements lasted until Crowley's death in 1947.

Again, to quote Rogers:

Jack was the antithesis of the common image of the Black Magician; in fact he bore little resemblance to his revered Master, Aleister Crowley, either in looks or in his personal conduct. He was a good looking man in his early or mid thirties, urbane and sophisticated, and possessed a fine sense of humor . . . I always found Jack's insistence that he believed in and practiced magic har d to reconcile with his educational and cultural backgr ound. At first I thought it was all fun and games, a kick he was on for its shock value to his r

espectable friends; but after seeing his cor respondence with Crowley, and the evidence of the fr equent remittances to Crowley, I had to give him the benefit of the doubt.

The association becomes easier to r econcile when one consider s Crowley's o wn vie w of magic , pr esented in *Liber O vel Manus et Sagittae*: "In this book it is spoken of the Sephiroth, and the Paths, of Spirits and Conjur ations; of Gods, Spheres, Planes, and many other things which may or may not exist.

"It is immaterial whether the y exist or not. By doing certain things certain r esults follo w; students ar e most earnestly w arned against attributing objective reality or philosophic validity to any of them."

Despite Parsons' outward appearance, he was the subject of regular public attention and rumor s that he w as the leader of a "black magic cult," rumor s denied b y his scientific associates , man y of whom were regulars at the house, if not members of one or the other orders. As early as 194 1, Parsons was investigated (at his pr evious residence), but no arrests were made. Rather than any occult activities, this investigation concerned some e xplosives he was storing at the house, either the tetr anitromethane Malina mentioned, or the gunpowder Forman's first wife talked about, or both.

In 1942, local police came to 1 003 S. Orange Grove to investigate an alleged backy ard cer emony wher ein a pr egnant w oman had reportedly jumped nude thr ough a fir e nine times. The police made it clear that the y thought the claim absur d and that the y were only investigating because it w as their duty. Parsons easily assured them of his community standing: he was an important rocket scientist with a professional reputation to uphold. Ironically, the ceremony probably took place as described.

A 16-y ear-old bo y r eported P arsons to the police , claiming that three of P arsons' follo wers had for cibly sodomized him during a "Black Mass" at the house . Again the police inv estigated but found Parsons' "cult" to be little mor e than " an organization dedicated to religious and philosophical speculation, with r espectable member s such as a Pasadena bank president, doctors, lawyers, and Hollywood actors." The actor John Carradine, for example, read one of Crowley's poems at the inauguration of Agape Lodge No. 2 in 1935.

In September 1942, the P asadena police r eceived an anon ymous tip via a letter sent by an ex-member of the Agape Lodge bearing the signature “A Real Soldier” and postmark ed San Antonio, T exas that accused P arsons of “black magic and se x or gies.” Once again, Parsons was cleared of all char ges. An anon ymous letter w as also sent in October 1944.

Local papers are said to have revived these stories during slow news periods, but I w as unable to find an y of the articles . The police always stood b y their original findings whene ver further accusations arose. Too many cries of “W olf!” made them turn a blind e ye. Although r ape w as not going on, plenty of other unusual (but legal) things w ere, and the neighbor s just had to learn to live with it.

The Pasadena branch of the OTO had its other tr oubles, some of which were caused by Parsons’ and Crowley’s financial go-between, Karl Germer. Germer had arrived in the United States from a German concentration camp and settled in Ne w York. His stated goal w as to work on building up the OTO in his new country; in actuality he did the opposite. Germer took a par anoid dislike to Wilfr ed Smith, perhaps because he sa w him as a competitor for the lead position, and began a smear campaign, constantly writing Cr owley about Smith’ s activities in the worst possible light.

Wilfred Smith had a r eputation as a w omanizer which equaled that of Crowley, who viewed his own succession of “Scarlet Women” as a necessary magical aid. Smith’s affairs, however, seemed to be an opportunity for Germer to deride him. Ov er 2 00 letter s exchanged between Crowley and Smith during this period have been preserved, letters that evidently document the slo w but steady deterior ation of the relationship between Crowley and Smith.

Like P arsons, Lodge Master Wilfr ed Smith w as a good-looking man with a charming per sonality and a str ong love of women. One of Smith’s lovers was Helen Parsons, John’s wife, who bore Smith a son in 1943. Germer convinced Cr owley that this affair w as the last straw with Smith, who was now a detriment to the work of the OTO, particularly with a child to r ear.

Ironically, considering the “Gr eat Beast’ s” o wn salacious r eputation, Crowley wrote Smith that he was giving the OTO “the reputation of being that slim y abomination ‘a lo ve cult.’ Alr eady in 19 15 in Vancouver, all I

knew of you was that you were running a mother and her daughter in double harness—since then one scandal has followed another."

Crowley himself w as no str anger to scandal. In fact, he himself had had a number of children by different women. This "black magician," as he came to be considered in his native England, eventually committed many blasphemies against Christianity , which, after his wretched childhood, he set out to destr oy and r eplace with "Crowleyanity" and his "La w of Thelema," which he truly hoped would sweep the world.

Married to Rose Kelley, whose brother Gerald would become the Knighted Pr esident of London' s R oyal A cademy, Cr owley liv ed a leisurely life because of a large sum of money his father left him. He was an imposing figur e and the beneficiary of numer ous unusual adventures. One night of his and R ose's honeymoon, for e xample, was spent in the so-called King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid, during which Crowley worked ceremonial magic.

Crowley was not content to be monogamous, however, and he had a v oracious se xual appetite for both w omen and men. In fact, the "Key" to the OTO was sex magick. Cr owley's sex rites, however, were not to be tak en lightly or casually, as he himself thought them to be very serious and powerful magic.

Crowley's ritual sex partners were often prostitutes and men he'd picked up in Turkish bath houses. Even with the women the Great Beast often insisted on ha ving anal intercourse, so convinced w as he of its magical qualities. One of his sexual partners and first disciples w as Victor Neubur g, an orthodo x Je w who had become agnostic and with whom Cr owley pla yed the passiv e r ecipient. Neuburg, who was in lo ve with the Gr eat Beast, was also the victim of Cr owley's sadism, enduring beatings , including one acr oss the butt with nettles.

In his pr actices he also used his "Scarlet W omen," including a young girl named Leah Hir sig, to whom Cr owley had tak en a fanc y in the spring of 1918. Leah did not serve as the Scarlet Woman, however, until 192 0, at Cr owley's Abbe y of Thelema at Cefalu, Sicily , which he and Leah called the "College of the Holy Ghost" and which was "sexually free." At one point at the Abbey, a male goat was supposed to copulate with Leah, but he "failed to

perform” and was sacrificed, splattering Leah with his blood.

One scandal that nearly torpedoed Cr owley w as the death of a young acolyte who had engaged in a ritual of drug-taking and drinking the blood of a sacrificed cat. The incident w as the source of sensational headlines in London: “Ne w Sinister R evelations of Aleister Crowley. Varsity Lad’s Death. Enticed to ‘ Abbey’. Dreadful Ordeal of A Young Wife. Cr owley’s Plans ,” as w ell as “Young Wife’ s Story of Crowley’s Abbey. Scenes of Horror. Drugs Magic and Vile Pr actices.” Crowley was accused not only of sexual deviation but also of cannibalism. Because of such bad publicity, Crowley ironically riled Italy’s fascist dictator, Mussolini, no angel himself, and w as subsequently tossed out of that country and his abbey.

The German br anches of the OTO were closed because of the Nazis, who also arrested and tortured Crowley’s main advocate and money-supplier, Karl Germer, one of whose friends, Martha Küntzel, became an ar dent admir er of Hitler and “r egularly bombar ded Crowley with letters loaded with praises of Hitler.”

Adding to his scandals, at one point Crowley tried to make money selling “Elixir of Life Pills” that w ere supposed to enhance virility . Those who took them pr obably never realized they were composed of a “neutral base combined with Crowley’s own semen.” They were probably energized by some sort of se x magick.

Thus, it is clear that Crowley’s excoriation of Smith was based not on any so-called morals but w as merely an excuse for him to blast Smith. In reality, when Cr owley heard that Smith had legally incorporated the Chur ch of Thelema, he mistak enly took it to mean that Smith intended to r aise his ne w son to r eplace Cr owley. Germer played no little part in this deception.

Crowley removed Smith thr ough an ingenious means . First, he drew up a horoscope for Smith based on the unusual cir cumstance of his birth. Smith’ s hor oscope had a comple x of eight planets , which one could easily interpret as if Smith were an avatar of some god. This comple x was something Cr owley had found in only one other instance, that of Shak espeare. He called it “one of the most astonishingly fortunate figures that Frater 666 [Crowley] has ever set up in his whole life!” and printed the hor oscope, intended only for Smith, under the title, “Is Smith A God?” The 12-page document was also

titled *Liber Apotheosis* or *Liber 132*.

Crowley wrote: The simple, the astounding tr uth, flooded the mind of Frater 666 with light. It explains all obscurities; it reconciles all contradictions. We have all of us thr oughout been kindled by a single misappr e-hension, precisely as if a Staff of Astronomers mistaking a planet for a star, observed its motion, and so found nothing but irritating, bewildering, inexplicable attacks upon the "Laws of Natur e."

All becomes clear on r ecognizing the fundamental mistake: Wilfred T . Smith, Frater 132, is not a man at all; he is the Incarnation of some God!

He hoped Smith' s ego w as big enough to fall for it y et he also secretly wondered if it w eren't somehow true, as his belief in astr ology required it to be true no matter ho w paradoxical he per sonally found it to be. The members of the lodge started referring to Smith as "the Unknown God," a reference to the New Testament verse of Acts 17:23, which reads: 0

For as I [Paul] passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'T o an unknown god.' What ther efore you worship as unknown, this I pr oclaim to you.

It has not been documented whether Smith e ver claimed "Knowledge & Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel," which was a part of the A∴A∴'s 5°=6 rite.

"Is Smith A God?" continues:

The word "god" implies a fact; it is no question of convenience as when the Ephesians called Barnabas "Jupiter" and Paul "Mercury." [Acts 14]

The incarnation of a god is an exceedingly rare event to become known, although fr equent enough when he makes it secr etly "to take his pleasure on the earth among the legions of the living." It being known, it is important to ascertain his purpose, especially as (in the present case) the material envelope has been so per fectly constructed that he is himself not fully aware of it.

One must distinguish such cases very sharply indeed from that phenomenon —in these days so common as to constitute an appeciable percentage of the population as to exercise noticeable influ-ence upon society—of the

incarnation of elementals.

Nor is a god her e to be confounded with a daimon or angel, even although his function wholly or in par t prove to be that of an angel or messenger (cf. *The Book of the Law I* , 7: there is no reason to suppose that Aiwaz is, or is not, a living man).

By “god” is to be understood a complete macr ocosmic individual as contrasted with human-elementals who incar nate par tialplanetary or zodiacal-intelligences of higher or lower rank in the Yetziratic Hierarchies; such are salamanders, undines, sylphs and gnomes in human form.

It is of the first impor tance for those who would reap full benefit from the sojourn of such a King on this planet that they should understand his nature; they ought to know his name! To determine his identity is a task of notable magnitude . . .

It must therefore be his primary task to recognize himself. With this end in view he must first of all withdraw completely fr om further occasion of contamination; and he must devise for himself . . . a true method of self-realization.

It is not necessar y that the god should have incar nated at (or before) the bir th of Wilfr ed T. Smith. A quite possibly significant moment might have been the Summer Solstice of 1916, or during the Winter of 1906 when ter rific forces were set in motion by the Chiefs of the Order.

The “child” (i.e. the “god”) might well have been begotten by the Paris W orking (Januar y, 1914) or as the r esult of some of the immense Enochian invocations: in the latter case the name of the god required might be found on the W atch Towers of the Universe [the Enochian Tablets], his natur e deter mined by analysis of the squares concerned. Another possibility suggested by the place of residence of Frater 132 is that one of the aboriginal “Red Indian” gods may have seized the opportunity somehow afforded by Frater 132’s state at the moment . . .

Frater 132 has to realize and proclaim his identity and function very much as Frater 666 regards himself in the light of what is spoken of him in *The Book of the Law*. He ought to be able to say simply: I am Apu-t or Kebeshnut or Thoum-aesh-neith, or as may be the case. It will not serve the present

purpose to accept Asar [Osiris], or Ra, or one of the universal gods such as of whom all men are in a sense incarnations.

Crowley then sent Smith on a “Gr and Magical R etirement” to find the god within himself. Unkno wn to her, Helen was going to accompany him, but it is unclear where their son went during this time. The High Priestess of the Agape Lodge, Regina Kahl, was quite ill and spent much of this period in the hospital. Her last attendance of a lodge meeting occurr ed in No vember 1942. After his “r etirement,” Smith often tried to go back to the house according to Grady McMurtry (later Hymenaeus Alpha X°), but he was not welcome there.

At this time, Parsons was corresponding with McMurtry, who was stationed in Eur ope on military duty . McMurtry often sent P arsons poems he had written, usually of a m ystical nature. Parsons encouraged McMurtry to contact Cr owley while he w as in England, an act that led to Cr owley initiating McMurtry all the w ay to the X° of the OTO. To Parsons’ surprise, McMurtry returned to the United States a few short years later as his superior in the Order. With Smith having left, Parsons was Acting Head of the Lodge at this time.

Smith’s retirement took place at a turkey farm outside of Pasadena belonging to a member of the lodge named R oy Leffingw ell. In his quest to find the god within himself, Smith had to build a small altar from rocks he found the site. He also had to tattoo the “Mark of the Beast” on his for ehead or right palm and (if desir ed) over his heart and his *mons veneris* (sic). Everything that happened to him during the retreat was to be carefully recorded and forwarded to Germer, the “Outer Head” of the OTO. Eventually, Smith was told by Leffingwell to leave the farm.

While Smith thus floundered, Parsons had plenty of money for his occult activities , as , b y the summer of 1943, A erojet w as doing $650,000 in business. In June of that y ear, Parsons and v on Kármán were invited to Norfolk, Virginia, where they turned their attention to aircraft carriers because JATOs were unable to keep up with the bigger bombers and the ease with which run ways were now being constructed. Two of v on Kármán’s former students w ere now a captain and an admir al in the Na vy, and the Hungarian and P arsons w ere invited to demonstrate their JATOs for the

Secretary of the Navy and his admirals. This test took place on the USS *Charger*, which w as docked at Norfolk. Parsons outfitted a Grumman airplane with solid-fuel JATOs, but when the plane took off it co vered the Secretary and his admirals with a cloud of yellow smoke that left a nasty residue. A few of the officers got mad, but the Secretary merely told them to find a way to get rid of the smok e and they would have a contract. This incident led to the development of Aeroplex, Aerojet's brand name for smokeless powder.

Also in 1943 P arsons divorced Helen, ha ving struck up a r elationship with her y ounger sister (the y may have been half-sister s), Sara Elizabeth Northrup, AKA "Betty." Another version of events says that Parsons took up with Betty before this, when Helen was out of town. Parsons told his old friend R ypinski, "I got rid of m y wife [Helen] b y witchcr aft." Born April 8, 1925, Betty w as tall (5 ′ 9 ″), slender, with blondish brown hair. Like Helen before her, Betty acted as Parsons' priestess at the Gnostic Mass, the pair fulfilling the roles left vacant by Smith and K ahl. Parsons' devotion was such that the Mass was held every single day. Betty was also Parsons' partner in the performance of se x magick—the "magic" of inducing alter ed states through prolonged sexual ecstasy. K ahl, on the other hand, was a lesbian.

At Parsons' ur ging the 18-y ear-old Betty left the Univ ersity of Southern California (USC). Parsons was 11 years her senior, and her parents were not at all happ y about the arr angement. Parsons later noted the implied element of adultery and incest in this r elationship with his wife's sister was most appealing. (The breaking of taboos is a typical "tantric" practice, but it may also be that Parsons felt stung by his wife' s "betr ayal" with Smith.) P arsons and Betty liv ed as a couple, although they never did marry.

Interestingly, Parsons encouraged Betty to take other lovers, as he did, because he per ceived himself abo ve the petty jealousies felt b y normal men. F or a time , this sentiment w as true, and their v arious affairs seem to ha ve strengthened their feelings for each other , paradoxical as that may sound. At the end of the day, they always had one another to turn to.

Of their relationship, Alva Rogers wrote:

Betty, who had been living with Jack for a number of years, complemented him admirably. She was young, blonde, ver y attractive, full of joie de vivr e,

thoughtful, humorous, generous, and all that. She assisted Jack in the OTO and seemed to possess the same devotion to it and to Crowley as did Jack . . . The rappor t between Jack and Betty, the strong affection, if not love, they had for each other, despite their fr equent separate sextracur ricular activities, seemed pretty permanent and shatterproof.

As P arsons w as fond of Cr owley, so w as the magus in turn impressed by Parsons, although he w orried about the y oung man' s loyalty to Smith, in whom Crowley could only see trouble. Soon after Smith departed, Parsons sent an offer of retirement to Crowley, as he thought Crowley was treating Smith unfairly and therefore didn't feel right about taking his place. Crowley did not accept the offer and, in July 1943, wr ote a letter to lodge member Max Schneider: " As to Jack: I think he is perfectly alright at the bottom of e verything; but he is very young, and he has at pr esent nothing like the strength to deal with matters within his jurisdiction objectively." (Schneider and his wife had a small cabin on Mount P alomar that the member s of the lodge often used for short retreats.)

Although quite reckless in his personal life, Crowley was a decent judge of char acter, and his opinion of Jack w as good, if some what guarded, consistently documented in his letters to other members. In December of 1943, Crowley wrote to the actress Jane Wolfe, who had earlier alerted him to Parsons' potential as "the child":

Jack is the Objective (Smith is out, an afaire classée: anybody who communicates with him in any way is out also; and that is that, and the best plan is to sponge the whole slate clean, and get to work to build up Thelema on sound principles. And no mor e of this brothel-building: let's use marble, not r otten old boar ds!) Jack's trouble is his weakness, and his r omantic side —the poet—is at present a hindrance. He gets a kick from some magazine trash, or an 'occult' novel (if only he knew how they wer e concocted!) and dashes off in wild pursuit. He must learn that the sparkle of champagne is based on sound wine; pumping carbonic acid into urine is not the same thing.

I wish to God I had him for six months—even three, with a hustle—to train in Will, in discipline. He must understand that fine and fiery flashes of Spirit come fr om the organization of Matter, from the drilling of ever y function of ever y bodily or gan until it has become so r egular as to be automatic, and

car ried on by itself deep down in the Unconscious. It is the steadiness of one's Heart that enables one to endur e the raptur e of gr eat passion; one doesn't want the vital functions to be excitable.

In F ebruary 1944, he wr ote to the Burlingames (also lodge members):

. . . I am ver y glad indeed of your of fer to co-operate practically in any way possible. I have left Jack Parsons in charge; he is quite all right in essence, but ver y young and easily swayed by passing influences. I shall look to you to help in keeping him up to the mark.

In contrast, three Aerojet memos written by Parsons in August of 1944 clearly sho w him in char ge of his pr ogram there, working on smokeless powder with aluminum perchlorate as an oxidizer. Despite others' failures with these materials , Parsons practically insisted on moving ahead with his o wn experiments. He also attended a solid fuel conference during the summer and fall of 1944, of which his typed notes are now in the JPL archives.

Obviously, Parsons liked to be in charge and not under authority, in both his pr ofessional and per sonal liv es. Sometime that y ear Parsons made an inter esting statement in a letter sent to McMurtry: "I am a little sour on the OTO inasmuch as by experience I doubt the value of member ship coming in e xcept via pr evious experience and individual training of the A∴A∴ sort. It seems to me the early grades (which are all we have here) are too free in admitting non-descripts and too lax in that they do not provide a definite program of training and qualifications. The better people I have met always seem to come via an interest in A∴A∴ aspects." This instance is not the fir st time Parsons questioned his association with the OTO, nor would it be his last. He had a long history of bucking authority; theO TO soon became one more "authority" trying to tell him what to do.

While he concerned with formal tr aining and qualifications in his "spiritual" life, Parsons had no need for it in his aer ospace occupation. Indeed, he thrived without such academic accomplishment and credentials, as did the business and science he helped found. In 1944, GALCIT changed its name to the Jet Pr opulsion Laboratory (JPL), a term coined in a memorandum written by von Kármán, Malina, and Tsien on No vember 2 0, 1943. A t that time their budget w as an astounding $65 0,000, and appr oximately 80 people w orked ther e, though Summerfield w as still oper ating

out of his car . Malina w as soon named Director of JPL, a position he held until 1946, although he is usually r eferred to as the second Dir ector, v on Kármán b y default being the fir st. It seems that Malina w as retreating from his anti-capitalist stance, also expressing to his parents just a little over a year earlier that “we are getting to be more and more like capitalists.” However, Malina and his fir st wife w ere long-standing member s of the local communist “cell,” which certainly had much to do with his getting out of the rocket business after the end of the w ar.

Despite the impr essive budget, the JPL facilities were still r ather primitive. Eugene Pierce, a local architect, took a job as an administrative assistant ar ound this time . Of his fir st trip to the *arroyo* he said, “I took one look at those half-a-dozen nondescript, corrugatedmetal and r edwood-tie and stone buildings and thought, m y God!—what have I gotten m yself into? Ther e’s no futur e for an ar chitect here.” Inside, the buildings things were no better. The corridors were extremely narrow, and Pier ce shared an 8-b y-10 office with Malina and secretary Dorothy Lewis, with whom JPL historians were able to conduct an oral history interview in 1972. In the interview, Lewis told them that P arsons “w as the clo wn of the gr oup. He lo ved to pla y jokes. That was all right.” Dorothy’s office overlooked the liquid fuel test pit. Conversation halted whenever a test was run.

Malina and Summerfield launched a small series of r ockets called the “Priv ate” in 1944, when Malina paused long enough to r ealize that they now had the means to carry out the original goal of the early GALCIT group. Constructed of little mor e than JATOs to which fins and a nose cone were attached, the Privates successfully carried meteorological equipment high into the atmospher e—for the purposes of pur e research rather than military applications . This completed goal made Malina happ y. The Priv ate A w as launched fr om Leach Spring, at Camp Irwin near Bar stow, California, an army base in the Mojave Desert.

The following year, however, found Malina working with missiles meant to be fir ed into enem y territory . The pr oject ORDCIT—“America’s first long range missile and space exploration program”—was formed for this purpose , in the same *arroyo* where GALCIT was located. Two of the missiles de veloped, the solid-fuel Ser geant and the liquid-fuel Corporal, were never deployed, but the later R egulus missile was. The Regulus was developed by

others for deployment in western Europe during the Cold W ar. These small, mobile missiles were launched from the backs of trucks and, as with the other early missiles, were simply made fr om large solid-fuel JATOs with a fe w minor modifications to make them fly.

It is another odd " coincidence" that the term "R egulus," a star in the constellation Leo, appear s in the w ork of Aleister Cr owley, appearing in the title of Crowley's *Liber V vel Reguli* in its plural form. Reproduced in R egardie's *Gems from the Equinox, Liber V* is "the Ritual of the Mark of the Beast: an incantation pr oper to invoke the Energies of the A eon of Horus , adapted for the daily use of the Magician of whatever grade." The "Mark of the Beast," of cour se, is what Smith was supposed to tattoo on himself during his r etreat.

On March 11, 1945, Parsons wrote to McMurtry that he w as "trying to get out from under [the OTO] and more into A∴A∴ work which suits me far better and in which I think I can do mor e." However, he was not quite r eady to lea ve the OTO at this time , and its appar ent influence on his life would continue.

Despite his occult leanings , Parsons enjoyed respectability in his professional work. On Mar ch 15 the *Saturday Evening P ost* ran an article called " JATOs Get 'Em Up," highlighting the v ery successful use of solid-fuel JATOs, with mention of Parsons, Forman, Malina and Summerfield as the de velopers, under the dir ection of v on Kármán. The article discusses the differ ent w artime applications for which JATOs were currently being used, including on the Na vy's PB-2Y seaplanes and the small Corsairs that were launched from aircraft carriers. Because of the JATOs, which helped them launch without the advantage of a long, smooth str etch of w ater, Catalan Flying Boats were able to land in the chopp y waters of the South P acific, undeterred by 18-foot swells, to carry out a r escue mission. Another dramatic rescue was made in Southern California when a Martin Mariner was forced down in a small lak e: the Mariner needed a full mile to take off, but the lake was only 3000 feet at its greatest width, so JATOs were mounted under the plane' s wings, allowing it to get back into the air safely.

Another one of the JPL group, Charles Bartley [22], made an improvement to P arsons' original asphalt binder in 1945. T o r eplace the asphalt, Bartley

created a polysulfide compound, for which the word “thiokol” w as coined, fr om the Gr eek w ords for “sulphur” and “glue.” Called “Thiok ol LP-2,” the compound is a polymer , which means an artificial compound with a very repetitive molecular structure consisting of long molecules joined together endlessly . The r egular molecular structur e is what giv es polymer s their desir able qualities.

The compound name can also be found in “Morton-Thiok ol,” a well-recognized aerospace manufacturing firm today. As late as the Korean War, solid-fuel JATOs were used on Sabre Jet fighters, which would jettison the canisters after use, such that the Korean jungles must be full of them. Solid-fuel r ockets launched the P olaris missiles, a name corr elating to “P ole Star,” the monik er Parsons used in writing to r efer to Smith. Solid fuel, of cour se, is also what launches the Space Shuttle, of which Morton-Thiokol was the manufacturer until the Challenger disaster , after which A erojet got the contract.

In 1945, Betty’s sentiment was recorded by Jane Wolfe who shared some other concerns about P arsons’ private life in a letter to K arl Germer:

There is something strange going on, quite apar t from [Wilfr ed] Smith. Ther e is always Betty [N or thrup], r emember, who hates Smith. But our own Jack is enamored with Witchcraft, the hounfort, voodoo. From the start he always wanted to evoke something—no matter what, I am inclined to think, as long as he got a r esult.

According to Meeka [Aldrich] yester day, he has had a r esult—an elemental he doesn’t know what to do with. Fr om that statement of hers, it must bother him—somewhat at least.

Parsons’ ardent thrill-seeking was, of course, not just professional but personal, and he once wrote that one of the rituals he used w as “liable to pr oduce dangerous side phenomena and sometimes permanent haunting in an ar ea where it is r epeated.” Wolfe’s “witchcraft” r eference is to one of P arsons’ pr ojects, called “The Witchcraft,” which, along with “The Gnosis ,” w as his attempt to devise a religious system of his o wn that addr essed fields Cr owley seems to ha ve stayed out of. The surviving paper s concerning The Gnosis and the Witchcr aft are reproduced in the book *Freedom Is A Two-Edged Sword*.

The elementals or spirits Parsons was invoking evidently disturbed the other Parsonage residents. One still-living and activ e member of the OTO and the A∴A∴ today, Phyllis Seckler (“Soror Meral,” initiated by Wolfe into the A∴A∴), recorded:

Meeka also reported to Jane that another two persons always had to do a lot of banishing in the house. They were sensitive and knew that there was something alien and inimical was there [sic]. When I had been ther e during the summer of 1944, I also knew ther e were troublesome spirits about, especially on the third floor. It got I couldn’t stand being up there, and a friend of mine couldn’t even climb the stairs that far, as the hair on the back of her neck began to prickle and she got thoroughly frightened.

The “Meek a” referred to w as Meek a Aldrich, who pledged the grade of Minerval in August 1945 and was granted the I° of the OTO on August 25. Like Helen Parsons had for a while, she served as the treasurer of Agape Lodge in September, though she shared that office with another during the follo wing month. Meek a kept active in the lodge after that, and w as the one who found places for the lodge to meet from late 1946 into 1948.

As the w ar ended, the founder s of A erojet started looking for a way to mak e the firm viable , because its futur e was suddenly v ery uncertain. It is ir onic that P arsons’ w ork, despite its anti-military beginnings and goal, had become the backbone of military oper ations, so much so that his company was virtually dependent on war. How he w as able to r econcile his pr ofession with his per sonal life, which, while hedonistic, he ostensibly viewed as spiritual, is a quirk of the human mind in gener al, as millions of other s have been able to do the same.

Fortunately, the firm w as able to convince Gener al Tire to invest in it. If it succeeded, fine; if not, Gener al Tire was big enough to absorb the loss as a tax write-off. With the purchase, Aerojet became Aerojet General, today known as GenCorp Aerojet. Once General Tire bought in, it decided it w anted the whole pie but none of the old-timers hanging ar ound, so it sent its people out to str ong-arm Aerojet’s founder s into r elinquishing their stock. All sold out but Malina, who happened to be in London at the time and who later wrote that sunspot activity disrupted the telegr aph tr ansmission, such that he never got the offer. The solar storm proved a boon, however, as he

became a millionaire as a result. In the ’60s, von Kármán calculated that if he himself had held onto his stock he w ould have been worth $12 million.

But it was hard to resist the offer Aerojet General was making. The war was ending, the futur e was uncertain, the gr oup had achie ved what they intended to achie ve with r ockets, and no w A erojet was offering them $50,000 apiece for their stock. Charles Bartle y remembers Parsons and Forman coming into his office at JPL quite excited, bragging how they had managed to get out of the compan y while they were still ahead. The w ar was over, they told him, and r ockets were finished. The field had no futur e. They were going to start a chain of laundr omats with their mone y and become rich men. It is difficult to understand how the two obviously passionate men could have given up their y outhful goals about r ockets so easily, particularly since they still hadn’t launched anything into space.

In fact, P arsons had actually sold out befor e the w ar ended and intended to continue his hazar dous passions . In a letter dated December 14, 1944 to Gr ady McMurtry, Parsons wrote that he had “sold out at Aerojet, purchased 1003 [S. Orange Grove Ave.], and am starting a ne w company engaged in chemical r esearch.” Evidently interested in other danger ous pursuits, he added that he w as trying to get the e x-High Priestess R egina K ahl to r eturn to the lodge . In apparent response to a question fr om McMurtry as to whether he could send Parsons anything from Europe, Parsons replied “a witch, young, red headed . . .” His letters to McMurtry are full of references to Europe being “witch country.”

The “lady-killer” Parsons did not confine his sexual largesse to his private w orld, ho wever. Indeed, both he and F orman w ere w ell-known around the A erojet office as w ell, and the office manager s cringed when the y sa w the r andy pair come in because both men seemed to be w orking their w ay through the secr etarial pool. Each had had affair s with se veral women there, according to those who knew them then, and their relationships with these women interfered with the secretaries’ work to the point of disruption. But the y were the founders, and their pr esence had to be toler ated until they sold out and left. Zwicky claimed that Hale y had actually convinced Parsons to sell out prior to the Gener al Tire buyout, simply because of his pr oblems at the office , but v on Kármán and other s disagree with Zwicky on this count. Parsons told Rypinski that he left because Aerojet was less inter ested

in r esearch and mor e interested in pr oduction and sales. However, Parsons did not get back into r esearch after he left.

Parsons and Forman formed Adastra Research, a small explosives company that w as investigated for " espionage" when the tw o were caught with a lar ge quantity of "x-nitr ate," a powerful explosive. It was determined that the compound had been pr ocured for e xperimental reasons, and the charges were dropped. Parsons then went to work for the Vulcan Powder Company in Pasadena, where he would remain for the next two years.

Back in New Mexico, Robert Goddard had his o wn problems. At the end of the w ar, he fell into a depr ession, became ill, and died before the y ear w as out. Certainly his failur e with r ockets—and Caltech's success—was a contributing factor.

In late A ugust of 1945, Lou Goldstone br ought L. R on Hubbar d over to meet P arsons, who lik ed Hubbar d immediately. As noted, Hubbard had been the model for D. Vance Wimple in White's *Rocket to the Mor gue*. He told a lot of w ar stories which, though har d to believe, were well-liked by most, and he fit right in with the unusual assortment of people who lived there.

Hubbard had just come from the Oak Knoll Naval Hospital in San Francisco and complained of v arious ailments including rheumatism, arthritis, hemorrhoids, conjunctivitis, and aches in his side , shoulder, stomach, and knee. After several hospital visits, Hubbard was given a medical dischar ge from the Navy and began r eceiving financial benefits when he told them he could no longer practice his livelihood of being a writer.

The Parsons circle included not only a circuit connecting Hubbard and Cr owley but also one linking Cr owley to Lo vecraft, whom Hubbard had met through Lovecraft biographer Frank Belknap Long. (Writers have tried for years to link Lovecraft and Crowley in one way or another, but this is a dir ect connection that has not y et been explored.) In addition, Hubbar d and Parsons associated with people in P asadena who had met Clark Ashton Smith, one of Lo vecraft's regular corr espondents, as w ell as of Cr owley's "inner cir cle." Lovecraft's "The Colour Out of Space" had appear ed in the September 1927 issue of *Amazing Stories*, the publication Ed Forman had

written about, so Parsons had probably read it. He may also have read *Weird Tales*, which regularly featured the work of Lo vecraft in the teens and tw enties. Judging b y Cr owley's remark in December 1943 in his letter to Jane W olfe, this was simply the sort of "magazine trash" Parsons was reading.

Parsons had begun his magical w ork with Betty, Helen's younger sister, after Helen had left with Smith. His encouragement of an open relationship, which demonstrated his evolution beyond petty human jealousy, was to backfire on him, however, as Betty readily agreed to take up other lo vers and ended up with Hubbar d. The r elationship was to be a source of extreme aggravation for Parsons, who suddenly had more than he could bear.

Hubbard charmed P arsonage r esident Alv a R ogers, who, lik e Hubbard, was a redhead. Indeed, Hubbar d confided his belief that all r edheads descended fr om the Neanderthal r ather than pur e *Homo sapiens*. "Needless to say," Rogers wrote, "I was fascinated." The redhead-Neanderthal connection is interesting to keep in mind when reading Williamson' s *Darker Than Y ou Think*, the story of werewolves who return to their atavistic state. Rogers further wrote:

It all began on an other wise undistinguished day in the late fall of 1945 when we got word that L. Ron Hubbard was planning to wait out his terminal leave from the Navy at "The Parsonage" . . . Short visits by such pr o authors as Jack Williamson, Edmond Hamilton, Tony Boucher, and other were fairly frequent; but Ron was planning on an extended stay.

Ron arrived on a Sunday, driving an oldish Packard and hauling a house trailer which he parked on the grounds behind the house. He originally intended staying in the trailer , but within a few days someone moved out of the house and he moved in.

I liked Ron from the first. He was of medium build, red headed, wore horned rim glasses, and had a tr emendously engaging personality. For several weeks he dominated the scene with his wit and inexhaustible fund of anecdotes. About the only thing he seemed to take seriously and be prideful of was his membership in the Explorers Club (of which he was the youngest member) which he had received after leading an expedition into the wilds of South America, or some such godforsaken place. Ron showed us scars on his body which he claimed wer e made by aboriginal ar rows on this expedition .

. . Unfortunately, Ron’s reputation for spinning tall tales (both off and on the printed page) made for a certain degree of skepticism in the minds of his audience. At any rate, he told one hell of a good stor y . . .

Ron was a persuasive and unscrupulous charmer, not only in a social group, but with the ladies. He was so persuasive and charmingly unscrupulous that within a matter of a few weeks he br ought the entire House of Parsons down around poor Jack’s ears. He did this by the simple expedient of taking over Jack’s girl for extended periods of time . . . Ron was supposedly his best friend, and this was more than Jack was willing to tolerate . . .

A reporter named Nieson Himmel also lived in the house, sharing room with Hubbard, after the latter moved out of his trailer and into he house. Himmel wrote:

Parsons was a superb chemist. He had this big old house up in Pasadena, among some huge old mansions. It was built by some rich people at the turn of the century. The coach houses were still back there . . . His specialty was explosives. He was a follower of Aleister Cr owley. He used to have meetings ther e. I knew him through science fiction, we had meetings of the science fiction society out there. They used to have these meetings come down the stairs in black r obes. There were two pyramid sor t of things where they held their ser vices. He converted the place into apar tments, about 19 of them. He put an ad in the paper, “Apartments for rent. (This was at the end of the war when no one could find a place to live.) Must not believe in God.”

There was an Englishman [Wilfr ed Smith] living in the coach house who was one of the original Crowley followers. Parsons made no secret that he was a follower . There were woodcuts in Cr owley books and Parsons had some of the originals. There were two crowds out there—science fiction and Crowley . . .

Parsons was living with a beautiful girl called Betty Nor thrup who I understand came from a rich family. She was beautiful, just lovely. This girl did not get mar ried. Hubbard came in, he was ir resistible to women, swept girls of f their feet. There were other girls living there with guys and he went through them one by one. Finally he fastened onto Betty. Parsons was desperately in love, but could not countenance marriage because of his beliefs. The atmosphere became ver y tense. Y ou would sit at the table and

the hostility between Hubbard and Parsons was tangible . . . Betty was not her name, Sara was her name. Everyone knew her as Betty, beautiful, sweet as nice could be, she had dr opped out of school to be with Parsons . . .

There was a bunch of people there, 18-20 in the big house and 5-6 in the coach house. When he br oke it up into apar tments, I think there were about 19 of them. The atmospher e became so tense . . . Lou Goldstone, an artist, was living there and he was my entree to the place . . .

I think Lou Goldstone intr oduced Hubbar d to the house. Although I think Parsons was an early science fiction fan.

Lou said he stumbled into a couple of meetings. I pr esume it was a black mass. People talked about it quite openly . . .

Betty was beautiful—the most gor geous, intelligent, sweet, wonderful person. I was so much in love with her , but I knew she was a woman I could never have . . . Betty was a raving beauty .

Alva Rogers was my first roomer, then Ron.

Himmel went on to a long car eer in crime writing and per sonally knew several mob bosses, including Bugsy Siegel and Mickey Cohen. He died in March 1999 at the age of 77.

Concerning Parsons' growing resentment towards the Hubbar d-Betty affair, Rogers wrote:

Although the three of them [Parsons, Hubbard, and Betty] continued to maintain a sur face show of unchanged amicability , it was obvious that Jack was feeling the pangs of a hitherto unfelt passion.

As events progressed, Jack found it increasingly difficult to keep his mind on anything but the torrid affair going on between Ron and Betty and the atmosphere around the house became supercharged with tension . . . In the end, Jack r eacted as any or dinary man would under similar circumstances.

In September 1945, Hubbard was declared unfit for service due to an ulcer and left the P arsonage to go to the hospital for a while to strengthen his disability claim. T o his cr edit, Hubbar d was sending what little he had to his wife and children, who were still living with his parents in Washington state.

In early December, Hubbard was “mustered out” of the Navy. The very ne xt da y he applied to the V A for his pension, claiming a sprained left knee, malaria, and other maladies. He told them he was a writer, that his income had been $65 0 per month befor e the w ar, and that no w it w as zer o. Then he hopped into his P ackard and pulled his small tr ailer to the P asadena, returning to the P arsonage and resuming his affair with Betty.

Alva Rogers was one who r ealized the true pain hidden beneath Parsons’ cavalier front. He wr ote of an accidental peek caught one night through the cracked-open door:

As events progressed, Jack found it incr easingly difficult to keep his mind on anything else . . . the atmospher e around the house became supercharged with tension; Jack began to show more and more strain, and the effort to disguise his metamorphosis from an emotionless Cr owleyite ‘super man’ to a jealousy-ridden human being became hopeless . . .

The final, desperate act on Jack’s par t to reverse events and salvage something of the past from the ruin that stared him in the face occur red in the still, early hours of a bleak mor ning in December. Our r oom was just acr oss the hall fr om Jack’s apar tment, the largest in the house, which also doubled as a temple, or whatever, of the OTO. We were brought out of a sound sleep by some weird and disturbing noises seemingly coming fr om Jack’s room which sounded for all the world as though someone wer e dying or at the very least were deathly ill. We went out into the hall to investigate the source of the noises and found that they came from Jack’s par tially open door. Perhaps we should have tur ned around and gone back to bed at this point, but we didn’t. The noise—which, by this time, we could tell was a sort of chant—drew us inexorably to the door which we pushed open a little fur ther in order to better see what was going on. What we saw I’ll never forget, although I find it har d to describe in any detail. The r oom, in which I had been before, was decorated in a manner typical to any occultist’s lair, with all the symbols and appur tenances essential to the proper practice of black magic. It was dimly lit and smoky from incense; Jack was draped in a black r obe and stood with his back to us, his ar ms outstretched, in the center of a pentagram before some sort of altar affair on which several indistinguishable items stood.

His voice, which was actually not ver y loud, rose and fell in a rhythmic chant of gibberish which was deliver ed with such passionate intensity that its meaning was frighteningly obvious. After this brief and uninvited glimpse into the blackest and most secr et center of a tortured man's soul, we quietly withdrew and returned to our room, where we spent the balance of the night discussing in whispers what we had just witnessed . . .

The ritual seems to ha ve w orked, at least tempor arily. After Hubbard's return, Parsons wrote in his diary, "I have been suffered to pass thr ough an or deal of human lo ve and jealous y . . . I ha ve found a staunch companion and comrade in Ron . . . R on and I are to continue with our plans for the Or der." They did so a fe w days later, on January 4, 1946. P arsons wrote to Cr owley around this time:

Most Beloved Father,

About three months ago I met Capt. L. Ron Hubbar d, a writer and explorer of whom I had known for some time . . . He is a gentleman; he has red hair, green eyes, is honest and intelligent, and we have become gr eat friends. He moved in with me about two months ago, and although Betty and I ar e still friendly , she has transferred her sexual affections to him.

Although Ron has no formal training in Magick, he has an extraordinary amount of experience and understanding in the field. From some of his experiences I deduce he is in dir ect touch with some higher intelligence, possibly his Guar dian Angel. He describes his Angel as a beautiful winged woman with red hair whom he calls the Empress, and who has guided him thr ough his life and saved him many times . . . Recently , he says, because of some danger, she has called the Ar changel Michael to guar d us . . . Last night after invoking, I called him in, and he described Isis nude on the left, and a faint figure of past, partly mistaken operations on the right, and a rosewood box with a string of green beads, a string of pearls with a black cr oss suspended, and a r ose . . . He is the most thelemic person I have ever met and is in complete accord with our own principles. He is also interested in establishing the New Aeon but for cogent reasons I have not introduced him to the Lodge.

We are pooling our resources in a partnership that will act as a limited company to contr ol our business ventur es. I think I have made a great gain,

and as Betty and I are the best of friends there is little loss. I cared for her deeply but I have no desir e to control her emotions, and I can, I hope, contr ol my own.

I need a magical partner. I have many experiments in mind . . . The next time I tie up with a woman it will be on my own ter ms.

Thy son, John.

Even at 30, Parsons was still young enough and immature enough to be quite impr essionable and vulner able, despite the fact that he had gone through repeated upheavals during his short life. He was a romantic, a poet—not a businessman. Hubbar d made a big impr ession on him, so much so that P arsons forgot his obligation and violated his oath to the Or der, revealing to Hubbar d the secr ets of the highest grades of the OTO—grades which P arsons himself ma y not have actually held but mer ely had access to some of the documents associated with them. However, two of his letters refer to himself as holding this grade, so the matter is unclear. He may have been exaggerating again.

With the w ar ended and the business buy out, it seems Parsons had a lot of time on his hands and thr ew himself into the magical work, possibly also as a distr action from and remedy for his painful experience with Betty and Hubbar d. The “magical partner” P arsons envisioned was to be his partner in a “w orking” of sexual magic—probably not a IX°, but one of his own devising that fell well outside the system of the OTO. Parsons was known to invoke spirits called elementals, so-called because of their association with the four elements of the ancients: Earth, Air, Water, Fire. The classical symbols associated with each are usually gnomes, sylphs, mermaids, and salamanders, r espectively. These ar e, of cour se, just s ymbols, such that modern replacements for each could be found: F or example, UFOs, perhaps, would be a good replacement for sylphs.

According to Cr owley, to summon an elemental r equires a lar ge amount of magical energy, the kind said to be gener ated by an VIII° working, the VIII° being a solo se xual rite, i.e ., masturbation. As Parsons once wr ote, “The inv ocation of lesser for ces (spirit, angel, demon, elemental) is e xact, since lo ve doesn’t usually enter in so much, in one sense [it is] far mor e danger ous than inv ocation of Gods. In the higher w ork you are actually

wooing the god—it is an act of art. In the lo wer you are compelling—it is an act of science .” (Whether Parsons actually followed the rites of the VIII° of the OTO is known only to initiates.)

There ar e se veral w ays to go about doing what P arsons w as attempting, and he wrote:

The primar y methods ar e: 1. Goetia *Daemonic*, 2. Planetar y *Clavicle of Solomon* , 3. Enochian *Elemental and Air es*, 4. Solar *Guardian Angel*. I have found the Enochian the best (although complicated). The Tarot corresponds to the Enochian system obtained by Dr. Dee—the Trumps to the Aires, the Court Cards to the Gods, Seniors and Angels, and the numbers to the lesser angels.

What it all boils down to is that Parsons experimented on his own with upper-degr ee OTO techniques usually char acterized as “se x magic,” i.e., to affect or bring about e vents. In addition, he r emains the best example in support of the OTO’s policy of keeping these techniques secret.

six

An Intr oduction to Enochian Magic

From Parsons' ritual references and other aspects of the occult world in which he so ardently participated, we can piece together the atmosphere surrounding his workings. For example, the Enochian s ystem r eferred to b y Parsons is a form of magic founded not b y the pr ophet Enoch but b y Dr. John Dee and Sir Edward K elley in 16th-century England. Enochian magic is not necessarily sexual in nature; in fact, its Elizabethan originators deliberately refused injunctions towards sexual immorality.

John Dee was born July 13, 1527 in Mortlak e, England, a small village on the Thames just outside of London. Dee was a bright boy, enrolling at the university at the age of 15. He began a lar ge private library at his home and eventually became proficient in various sciences including mathematics, navigation (much of which he learned firsthand during his world travels), astronomy, optics, and cartography. He also studied the hermetic sciences and was appointed to be the Royal Astrologer to Elizabeth I.

Dee had been imprisoned b y Queen Mary after dr awing up an unfavorable horoscope for her (at her r equest). Elizabeth pardoned him, and in addition to his otherw orldly duties he also acted as an agent of espionage, signing his secret communiqués to her "007." He seems to have developed some sense of esoteric duty to Elizabeth' s person or position, as ther e is e vidence he idolized her as the Egyptian goddess Isis . Indeed, his " esoteric duty" ma y even have included an application of the famous INRI formula, the "key word" used in Crowley's magic, in one of its many variations.

Dee married relatively late, in 1574, at the age of 47. History does not r ecord the name of the wife , who died the follo wing y ear. He remarried, this time to a Jane Fromond, one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting. Dee's studies continued independently, and by 1581 he felt he had exhausted all known sources of worldly knowledge and that the only way to continue his quest for knowledge was to turn to the otherworldly.

A godly man, Dee w as a good Christian and a member of the Church of England. He admir ed Enoch, the fir st man after the F all said to have walked with God. According to tradition, Enoch was the author of se veral apocryphal books , in which he w as said to ha ve recorded what he learned during these walks. These lost books were in fact pseudepigraphical, i.e., not written by Enoch, but Dee longed to find them and proposed to do it with the help of angels .

Addressing God, he pr ayed, “I ha ve read often in Th y books & records, how Enoch often injo yed Thy favour & conversation; with Moses thou was familiar; And also that to Abraham, Issack & Jocob, Joshua, Gideon, Esdr as, Daniel, T obias & sundry other s Th y good angels w ere sent b y Th y disposition, to Instruct them, informe them, helpe them, y ea in w orldly and domestick affair es, y ea and sometymes to satisfie their desir es, doubtes & questions of Th y Secrete.”

In his quest, Dee acquir ed from various sources several magical “shewstones,” with the intent of taking up cry stal-gazing. Try as he might, however, he couldn’t do it, as he was just too logical a thinker and his r ational brain resisted all attempts to impose a tr ance state upon it. He decided he needed a helper and enlisted the services of Edward Kelley, who had changed his name fr om Talbott. Kelley had a reputation as an alchemist; it was said he had produced gold once. It also seems he was something of a rogue. John Weever recorded the following adventure of K elley’s in the 16th-century *Ancient Funerall Monuments,* the spelling of which appear s to have been somewhat modernized:

This diabolical questioning of the dead for the knowledge of future accidents was put into practice by the said Kelley, who, upon a certain night in the park of W alton-le-Dale in the County of Lancaster with one Paul Waring (his fellow companion in such deeds of darkness) invocated some of the Infer nal Regiment, to know cer tain passages in the life, as also what might be known by the Devil’s foresight of the manner and time of the death of a noble young gentleman, as then in war dship. The black cer emonies of the night being ended, Kelley demanded of one of the gentleman’s servants what corse was the last buried in Law chur chyard, a church thereunto adjoining, who told him of a poor man that was buried ther e but the same day. He and the said Waring entreated this foresaid servant to go with them to the grave of the

man so lately inter red, which he did; and withal did help them to dig up the carcase of the poor caitif f, whom by their incantations they made him (or rather some evil spirit thr ough his or gans) to speak, who deliver ed strange predictions concerning the said gentleman. I was told this by the said serving-man, a secondary actor in that dismal abhorred business, and divers gentlemen and others ar e now living in Lancashire to whom he hath related this story. And the gentleman himself (whose memory I am bound to honor) told me a little before his death of this conjuration of Kelley, as he had it by relation from his said ser vant and tenant, only some cir cumstances except, which he thought not fit to come to his master's notice.

Kelley, called "the crop-eared wizard" because he had had his ears cropped as a punishment for earlier sorceries, moved with his family into a room in Dee' s house, where they subsisted on a £5 0 per year salary paid by Dee.

On a cold evening in 1582, March 8, Dee and Kelley sat down and gazed into one of the she wstones. Impatient, Dee soon got up and moved to ward the fir e, but within 15 minutes K elley w as seeing angels. Dee came quickly but sa w nothing and became content to assume the role of scribe, recording what Kelley relayed he was seeing.

According to K elley, the angels sho wed him large tablets bearing unusual letter s, which supposedly formed the oldest language of them all: the language of the angels . Kelley described the tablets to Dee, who wrote down what was said. The angel then pr oceeded to dictate the lost books of Enoch to K elley, by spelling them out letter-by-letter. The angel would point to a letter, and Kelley would tell Dee which letter it was.

During these tr ansmissions, K elley was so afr aid that the mer e mention of these letter s would be sufficient to inv oke demons, that he only would call out the row and column of each letter as the angel pointed to it. Dee w ould then look up the corr esponding letter and write it down. There were many more tablets, Kelley told Dee, which were not dictated.

The books completed, the angel next dictated the 30 "Aethyrs" (or "Aires") and their 19 Calls , which are for summoning angels to the caller, for the purpose of "scrying" or vie wing what w as in the Aethyr. The first five Calls were considered so powerful that the angel dictated them backwards to avoid conjuring up the guardians of the corresponding Aethyrs; the remainder were

dictated in the usual way.

The Aethyrs are likened to the spheres of the ancients , the planetary orbits thought to surr ound the earth. A ccording to ancient mythology and r eligion, souls ascending to hea ven had to pass through each sphere in succession, aided b y a series of holy names and passwords. Unsuccessful attempts led to reincarnation at best, or to hell. Tradition holds that many of the Aethyrs are guarded by harsh angels, even demons, who have no patience with men or magicians.

After the hazar dous dictation pr ocess was completed, the angel provided K elley with the English tr anslations, which r equired that Dee had to go back over the entire collection of transcripts and substitute the English. Although each Enochian letter has its English counterpart, it is not a letter-for-letter substitution or a code The letter correspondences were only pr ovided as a pr onunciation guide. An actual dictionary was dictated, and Dee had to tr anslate accordingly. Enochian is thus a language unto itself, with its own grammar and syntax. It is very succinct and has an odd relationship to English that it does not have with other languages. One example of Enochian is the w ord “Babalon,” meaning “harlot” in Enochian, as in the “Whore of Bab ylon.” The Enochian s ystem being complicated, the entire process of dictation and tr anslation took se ven years, from 1582 to 1589.

Amazingly enough, considering the language’ s comple xity, the Enochian Calls translate into English remarkably well. Regardless of the fact that they were dictated backwards and forwards, and that the translations were only pr ovided later, Enochian turned out to be a coherent language previously unknown to man.

The Calls, when translated, are quite evocative, and contain some very beautiful passages . Although it could easily be claimed K elley was making the whole thing up, the Calls were nothing at all like his usual writing style, which was quite crude even when he wrote verse. It seems improbable for Kelley to have defrauded Dee in this regard, as the system is just too immense and w ell structured.

Along with the Calls w ere dictated instructions , such as when scrying or cry stal-gazing the tw o were to arr ange a special cedar table, ar ound the perimeter of which w as inscribed in Enochian, “This is the place of the

outpouring of for gotten treasure in the form of ecstasy. Only fire is substantial her e. This is the w ay of Babalon and of the Beast who is the fir st form. The eyes only need rest upon the name of an y guar dian and its r epresentative will speedily be encountered." The whole thing is scr ambled in the original, and the name "Babalon" is e xtremely so, in or der to a void summoning the Harlot.

In addition, a special ring and r obes had to be w orn. Some of these artifacts are preserved in the British Museum. The angels pr ovided additional messages as w ell, some of which w ere cause for great concern on the part of Dee and K elly. These communications parallel unorthodox messages received from 19th-century fairies and 20th-century occupants of UFOs. For example, at one point Dee and Kelley were told:

1. That Jesus was not God.
2. That no prayer ought to be made to Jesus.
3. That there is no sin.
4. That man's soul doth go fr om one body to another childes quickening [i.e., reincarnation].
5. That as many men and women as are now, have always been.
6. That the generation of mankind fr om Adam and Eve, is not historical but allegorical.

Such seemingly blasphemous messages made K elley balk, and he grew more and more reticent to continue with their work. Dee had a devil of a time keeping him on, despite the £5 0 salary. The stress of the constant scrying once sent K elley running into the str eet like a madman, at which point Dee had to catch him and calm him do wn.

However, being a pious man, Dee had occasional misgivings himself. At one point he burned his entire collection of "angelick" works, allegedly to find thr ee of his books intact a fe w days later. Another time K elley knock ed o ver a lamp and accidentally burned se veral valuable manuscripts of Dee's.

Other messages w ere less oner ous, such as one instance in which the angel supposedly began dictating in Greek. Kelley, however, did not kno w Greek and soon thr eatened to stop dictating if the angel per sisted with this "Gh ybbrish." Nevertheless, enough came through for Dee to r ecognize the

message as a w arning not to trust Kelley.

According to the story, the angel later told Dee and Kelley to swap wives, but the tw o were so shock ed at this message that the y and their wives all signed a pact (at Dee's prompting) never to reveal this message to an yone. As noted, the br eaking of r eligious and se xual taboos, from the eating of meat and wine to incest and homose xuality, is considered a part of *tantra*. The shock is intended to decondition the initiate from his usual lifestyle. In the case of Dee and Kelley, living in prudish Elizabethan England, it w as asking too much—at least for no w. They did finally per suade their wiv es to agr ee to this seeming commandment from God: Dee recorded in his diary on May 3, 1587, "I, John Dee, Edward Kelley and our two wives, covenanted with God and subscribed the same , for indissoluble and inviolable unities, charity and friendship k eeping betw een us four , and all things between us to be common, as God by sundry means willed us to do."

Dee and Kelley left Mortlake for a tour of Europe in 1583, continuing their work with the angels as they traveled. When they returned in 1587, the y w ere horrified to see that a super stitious mob had sacked Dee's house and burned the contents, destroying most of his valuable library.

Undeterred by such a faith-destr oying event, the tw o continued, their work with the Calls ending one da y when K elley was scrying alone in the 7th Air e, during which time he r eceived the follo wing proto-thelemic message:

I am the daughter of For titude and ravished ever y hour fr om my youth. For behold, I am Understanding, and science dwelleth in me; and the heavens oppress me. They cover and desir e me with infinite appetite; for none that are earthly have embraced me, for I am shadowed with the Circle of the Stars, and covered with the morning clouds. My feet ar e swifter than the winds, and my hands ar e sweeter than the mor ning dew. My gar ments are from the beginning, and my dwelling place is in myself. The Lion knoweth not where I walk, neither do the beasts of the field understand me. I am deflowered, yet a virgin; I sanctify and am not sanctified. Happy is he that embraceth me: for in the night season I am sweet, and in the day full of pleasure. My company is a harmony of many symbols, and my lips sweeter than health itself. I am a harlot [BABALON] for such as ravish me, and a vir gin with such as know me not. Pur ge your str eets, O ye sons of men, and wash your houses clean;

make yourselves holy , and put on righteousness. Cast out your old strumpets, and burn their clothes and then I will bring forth children unto you and they shall be the Sons of Comfort in the Age that is to come.

The entire passage is r eminiscent of the gnostic te xt, “Thunder Perfect Mind,” unearthed at Nag Hammadi in 1945 but written at least 1700 years earlier.

This message w as the last str aw for K elley, and he finally snapped, robbing Dee of a lar ge sum and lea ving town with Dee’ s wife. The two did not return but ended up in Germany, where Kelley endeared himself to the Emperor. Focusing his attention increasingly on practical alchemy, Kelley was soon knighted but was later imprisoned (either for killing a man or simply to k eep him close to the Emperor), and died during an attempt to escape . Dee w as also imprisoned when James I, patron of the King James Bible, ascended to the English throne in 160 3. Despite his own personal, extrabiblical peccadilloes, the pious King James was scared of magic and put a quick end to Dee’ s career as royal astrologer.

Dee was subsequently put on trial for witchcr aft but was acquitted and spent his remaining years penniless. In 1608, he died, financially ruined but spiritually whole , appar ently ha ving used the Enochian s ystem for little mor e than the satisfaction of his o wn curiosity. The paper s he had hidden a way near the end of his life were not found for 1 00 years, and his diary w as not found for 2 00 years, but for at least one later student Dee’s personal tragedy would eerily appear to repeat itself.

As is well known in the world of the esoteric and occult, cry stal-gazing is not the only w ay one ma y scry in the A ethyrs, as tantric energy, or se x magick, may also be used to induce the same sort of ecstatic states that K elley used so long ago. The pr ovocative Parsons used this method, as did his libidinous mentor Crowley, who claimed to be the reincarnation of K elley, although that role would in reality be played to Parsons’ Dee by another man in his per sonal drama. In addition, Crowley further heightened his a wareness through the use of psychoactive drugs (see his *Liber LXXXIV vel Chanokh*). Crowley’s *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* , both w ell-received and vilified, w as accused of encour aging drug abuse . During the cour se of his life , Crowley consumed massiv e amounts of alcohol, opium, cocaine ,

hashish, peyote and heroin, to which he was addicted at his death.

Like Dee and K elley, Parsons eventually found himself in tr ouble, seemingly at the hands of the infamous Babalon, the Enochian Whore of Babylon, the traditional spirit of Rome who subjugated the children of Israel. Babalon, as the Harlot, is also a symbol of the material world in general, the root "mater" also meaning "mother," as in "Mother of Abominations." Adherents to the Jamaican r eligion of R astafari use her this sensual w ay, as any listener of r eggae music might kno w. A similar symbol for certain gnostic sects in the Middle East w as the "Land of the Dead," i.e ., Egypt. Like Egypt, Bab ylon was the land of corruption to the composers of the Bible, as in Revelation 17:3-6:

He [the angel] car ried my spirit away to the deser t. I saw the Scarlet Woman sitting on the Beast with seven heads and ten horns, covered with blasphemous names. The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold and precious stones and pearls, with a golden cup in her hand filled with abominations and the unclean things of her fornication. On her forehead a name had been written, a myster y: *Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the Earth*. I saw the woman was drunk from the blood of the Saints, and from the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. Seeing her, I wondered greatly.

According to P arsons, Babalon is the gnostic Sophia, slighted b y John the Revelator, but justifiably so, as she is still in her fallen state. John fails to offer her r edemption. She is also the Helen of Simon Magus mentioned b y P arsons in his *Analysis By A Master of the Temple*. She is the *Chokmah* of the Kabbalah, the Holy Wisdom who cries out in the first and eighth Psalms, folded into the *Shekhinah* of the Hebrews.

The Greek name Babylon is derived from the Semitic *Bab-Il*, meaning "the gate of God." At one time or another every holy city believed it was at the center of the w orld, the mystical center where the gate between the upper and lo wer w orlds is located. So it is with Jerusalem today for three of the world's major religions, with Benares for the Hindus, and with Mecca and R ome. Like so many other r eligious symbols, however, gates have a sexual symbolism as well.

The Hebrew for "gate of God" is *Bab-Al*, usually written *Bab-El* or simply

Babel. The name (actually a title) of God usually translated *El* (if tr anslated at all) is actually spelled with an “ A” (or *aleph* in Hebrew).

Although he no doubt follo wed the Enochian spelling, Cr owley claimed to ha ve “ corrected” “Bab ylon” to “Babalon” to giv e what was to him a meaningful *gematria*, a term used b y medieval Jewish scholars to describe the ancient pr actice of substituting number s for the letters in a word or name and adding them up to get a significant result. *Gematria* comes fr om a Gr eek w ord meaning “to measur e (land),” and this practice dates at least to Bab ylon, when single letters were used to stand for numbers rather than spelling them out. In an age that has used Ar abic numerals for centuries, the significance of this achievement may be hard to appreciate.

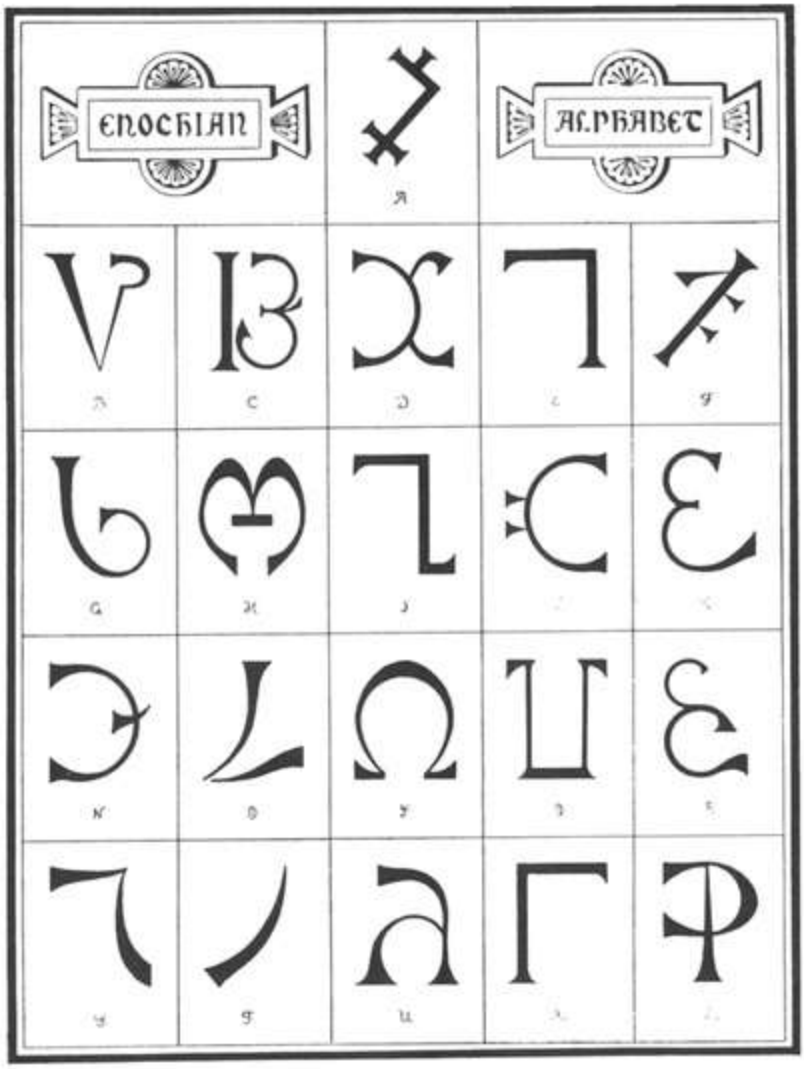
In this system of numeration, A = 1, B = 2, and so on. After the 10th letter (“ I” in the Hebrew and Greek alphabets, sometimes written as “Y”) there was no need for an 11 since “IA” stood for a 10 followed by a 1, which is the w ay we form numer als in our base 1 0 system. Eleven, in fact, is Cr owley’s “number of magick.” The 1 1th letter is “ K,” which, accor ding to gematria, equals 2 0, and so on. Thus BABYLON = 2 + 1 + 2 + 400 + 80 + 800 + = 1335, which is not a meaningful result.

In the Book of R evelation the original Gr eek is BABYLON with an upsilon (Y), rather than an alpha, while the final vowel is not omicron but is the long “o,” omega. Crowley’s “corrected” spelling BABALON = 2 + 1 + 2 + 1 + 30 + 70 + 50 = 156, a number significant to John Dee as the pr oduct of 12 and 13, the dimensions of the table upon which he received the Enochian alphabet from the angel.

Crowley referred to the number 156 as that of the “City of the Pyramids,” where initiates would spend the “Night of Pan.” Babylon was known for its ziggur ats, stepped pyramids built for the gods to descend and humans to ascend, serving as a model for the biblical Tower of Babel, also immortalized in the 16th car d of the Tarot.

In the Enochian s ystem, the City of the Pyr amids lies in the 14th Aire, above which (i.e ., 13th) is the Gar den of Nemo, Nemo being Enochian for “Master of the T emple.” The 12th Air e belongs to Babalon, and the 11th is called the Holy City The 10th Aire will be discussed in a later chapter. While Dee and K elley may have discovered the Enochian system and Babalon the

Harlot, Parsons was to make the latter more infamous.[23]



seven

The Babalon Working, Part 1: Januar y-Febr uar y 1946

Now that he had achie ved extraordinary success in his physical jet propulsion, it seems Parsons was intent on creating high-flying adventures on the metaphysical plane. In early 1946, using the Angelic language of John Dee and Edw ard Kelley, P arsons planned his magick al oper ation, k eeping diligent records per Cr owley's constant advice . The surviving fr agments of Parsons' Babalon W orking have been cir culated since the da ys of mimeograph machines, and ar e widely posted on the W orld Wide Web. They are not a part of *Freedom Is A Two-Edged Sword*, though the near futur e may see collected writings of John P arsons printed under one cover.

The working began January 4, 1946. At 9 p.m. Parsons wrote, "I followed this procedure for eleven days, from January 4 to 15," which is actually 12 days. Presumably, Parsons miscounted and carried on the working for one e xtra day, a simple mistak e difficult to belie ve of a rocket scientist.

To begin the working, Parsons chose one of the squar es from the Enochian "Air Tablet" (there are four 12-b y-13 tablets, one for each element), also known as the "Great Watch-Tower of the East." He did not record which of the 156 possible squares he chose. After preparing the other magical w eapons, at 9 p.m. he p repared and consecrated his "Air Dagger." An actual dagger purchased for this purpose, the weapon, he said, was the "special talisman of the oper ation."

Parsons then copied the s ymbols contained within the chosen square onto virgin parchment. These symbols consist of one of the seven planetary signs, one of the 12 zodiacal signs, a unique permutation of the four signs of the elements, and an Enochian letter in the center. Present as "Scribe" for the entir e operation was none other than Hubbar d, in what w ould e ventually r esemble the Dee-K elley operation. The ritual was ready to begin.

Parsons fir st inv oked the “P entagram of Air ,” a fiv e-pointed star traced in the air with the dagger. It starts at the upper right-hand point of the star, representing water, goes left to wards air, then tr aces the remainder of the star thr ough fir e (lo wer right), spirit (top), earth (lower left), then back to water. As he proceeds in the ritual, the magician must visualize the outline of the pentagram in brilliant purple (different for each element inv oked) as w ell as the s ymbol of air in the center. This ritual includes the oft-hear d recitation invoking the four archangels as representatives of the four cardinal directions, and hence the four elements. “Before me, Raphael; Behind me, Gabriel,” etc.

Parsons probably should ha ve invoked with the he xagram next, which is the w ay the rite usually goes , but he does not r ecord this being done. It may be that he assumed this step w as understood, or that he deliberately left it out of his writing to deter prying eyes from repeating his oper ation. There are he xagrams invoked later in the operation, during the inv ocation of the “Six Senior s,” and he ma y have felt these were sufficient.

Next Parsons recited from memory the “Invocation of the Bornless One,” a short invocation translated by Crowley and appearing at the beginning of his and Mathers’ translation of the Goetia, or *Lesser Key of Solomon*. It starts:

Thee I invoke, the Bornless One.
Thee, that didst create the Earth and the Heavens.
Thee, that didst create the Night and the Day.
Thee, that didst create the Darkness and the Light.
Thou art Osorronophris, whom no man hath seen at any time.
Thou art Jabas.
Thou art Japos.
Thou hast distinguished between the Just and the Unjust.
Thou didst make the Female and the Male.
Thou didst produce the Seed and the Fruit.
Thou didst form Men to love one another, and to hate one another.
I am Mosheh [Moses] Thy Prophet, unto whom Thou didst commit
Thy Mysteries, the Ceremonies of Ishrael [sic].
Thou didst pr oduce the moist and the dr y, and that which nourisheth
all created Life.
Dear Thou Me, for I am the Angel of Paphr o Osorronophris; this is

Thy True Name, handed down to the Prophets of Ishrael . . .”

The original inv ocation is tr aditionally ascribed to Moses , but it bears an Egyptian flavor reflecting the mysteries of Egypt, into which the Bible says Moses was initiated. Later v ersions “corrected” some of the spellings to bring them in line with Cr owley’s w ork: “Osorronophris” became ASAR UN-NEFER (a form of Osiris), for example. It w ould ha ve been this corr ected v ersion that P arsons used. The complete text can be found in “Liber Samekh” in Cr owley’s *Magick*, and represents the lengthy rite Crowley used at Boleskine to attain to the Kno wledge and Conv ersation of his Holy Guar dian Angel and thus to the 6°= 5 of the A∴A∴, in the v ersion quoted abo ve. Although evidently undocumented, it is possible that success during this ritual would have allowed Parsons to claim the 6°= 5 .

Parsons next recorded a “Conjur ation of Air,” a “Consecr ation of the Air Dagger” (appar ently a redundancy), and the K ey Call of the Third Aire, the latter of which is not to be confused with the element Air. The dagger is one of the four standard magical weapons used by the magician. The other three are the pentacle (or disk), the cup, and the wand.[24]

It seems that P arsons actually r ecited the “Third Key” (or Thir d Call), which is different from the Key Call of the Third Aire, as there is only one Key Call for all 30 Aires. However, the Third Call is appropriate to summon EXARP, the Angel of the Air T ablet, so it seems to have been a mistak e in nomenclatur e only. In other w ords, Parsons used the correct call but called it by the wrong name in his notes. The Third Key, in English, is:

Behold! Saith your God! I am a circle on whose hands stand twelve Kingdoms. Six ar e the seats of living br eath: the r est are sharp Sickles, or the Horns of Death. Wherein the creatures of earth are and are not, except in mine own hands; which sleep and shall rise!

In the first I made ye stewards, and placed ye in twelve seats of government: giving unto every one of you power successively over the 456 true ages of time: to the intent that from the highest vessels and the cor ners of your gover nments you might work my Power, pouring down the fires of life and increase continually on the earth. Thus you are become the skirts of Justice and Truth.

In the name of the same your God, lift up, I say , yourselves!

Behold! His Mercies flourish, and His Name is become mighty among us. In whom we say: Move! Descend! And apply yourselves unto us as unto the par takers of His Secr et Wisdom in your Creation.

All this invocation should have been done from memory. Next was an Invocation of God and of the King associated with the Air T ablet. The Secret Name of God associated with the Air T ablet is ORO-IBAH-AOZPI, meaning "He who cries aloud in the place of desolation." The King associated with the Air Tablet is named BATAIVAH, which means "He whose v oice seems to ha ve wings ." These odd names ar e all formed fr om the letter s on the Enochian tablets tak en in differ ent order, much like a seek-and-find puzzle in the ne wspaper.

Parsons ne xt inv oked the Six Senior s of the Air T ablet, whose names ar e HABIORO, AA OZXAIF, HTNMORD A, AHA OZAPI, AVTOTAR, and HIPOTGA. They are equivalent to the "airy" parts of Mars, Jupiter, the Moon, Venus, Mercury, and Saturn, r espectively—six of the se ven "planets" visible to the nak ed eye, the seventh (the King) being the Sun, the same as the se ven days of the w eek, albeit in a differ ent order. The Kings and Seniors are each invoked with their own special hexagram, in this case a He xagram of Air. Thus Parsons drew seven consecutive hexagrams in the air, visualizing the appropriate names and colors and pronouncing the names, then addressing each in turn, individually, with certain Enochian greetings. Again, from memory.

The next step is rather hazy in the record. Parsons says he invoked "blank by blank and blank to visible appearance." OTO scholars have filled in the first and last blanks, but the middle one remains a mystery. This first is written as RDZA, by which is sur ely meant ARDZA, Enochian for "He who pr otects," one of the "Calvary Cross" names, another long series that forms a certain pattern of letter s traced out on the four elemental tablets.

ARDZA is the name that controls the force of the "Air of Air" (upper left) quadrant of the Air Tablet. This force, not recorded by Parsons, is named IDOIGO, "He who sits on the Holy Throne." Since the upper left is where the letters ARDZA (in Enochian) appear on the Air Tablet, the proximate name IDOIGO is probably what Parsons left unrecorded in the middle blank, as that is the only possible complement to ARDZA in this rite.

The last blank is filled in with the name EXARP, again the Angel of the Air Tablet, who controls all forces associated with the element of Air, the Kings and Senior s being invoked merely to preside over the rite. Parsons would have been facing the dir ection of the pr evailing winds in Pasadena while invoking EXARP and, indeed, throughout the entire ceremony.[25]

The next statement is the simplest in Parsons' magical record, yet it is also the most important. P arsons merely writes, "Invocation of wand with material basis on talisman," the "material basis" of which is the "Marr ow of the Wand," the Wand, of course, representing the penis or phallus of the magician, while the Marr ow is the semen. During the rite, the magician is to inv oke the spirit and, while concentrating upon it, masturbate o ver the talisman. P arsons here was "energizing," even "fertilizing" the little par chment square bearing the chosen squar e from the Air Tablet, the form s ympathetic magic takes: a symbolic fertilizing of Parsons' desire through a very literal application of the usual means of fertilization. Crude , perhaps, but traditional.

Parsons then wrote "Invocation with [Air] Dagger," presumably an invocation of the elemental he wished to attr act, although he does not say. Lastly ar e the "License to Depart," a purification, and the banishings, which ar e a sign that the rite is o ver. The License to Depart is in the Goetia, or Lesser Key of Solomon, which Mathers and Crowley had translated years earlier. The first English-language edition appeared in 1903.

The License to Depart runs, "O thou Spirit N. [name of spirit, in this case EXARP], because thou has diligently answered unto my demands, and hast been v ery ready and willing to come at m y call, I do her e license thee to depart unto thy proper place; without causing harm or danger unto man or beast. Depart, then, I say, and be thou very ready to come at m y call, being duly e xorcised and conjured by the sacred rites of magic. I charge thee to withdr aw peaceably and quietly, and the peace of God be e ver continued betw een thee and me! Amen!" The invocation also occur s in Cr owley's later *Magick*, as w ell as in other texts by various authors.

Banishings ar e as equally inv olved as the inv ocations, as the y involve recreating (or, rather, "erasing") the v arious hexagrams and finally the pentagram in reverse of the original way they were traced. Needless to say,

this is a very long ceremony, lasting at least an hour, and again, all fr om memory. All the Kings and Senior s have to be banished, one at a time . Inter estingly, the pr ocedure outlined her e from the initial pentagr am to the final banishing is slightly differ ent from the textbook Enochian invocations. Parsons must have impr ovised somewhat.

In 1943, Parsons had published a brief poem in the *Oriflamme*, an OTO publication:

I hight Don Quixote, I live on peyote,
marijuana, morphine and cocaine,

I never know sadness, but only a madness
that burns at the heart and the brain.

I see each charwoman, ecstatic, inhuman,
angelic, demonic, divine.
Each wagon a dragon, each beer mug a flagon
that brims with ambrosial wine.

As documented by John S ymonds and Robert Anton Wilson, narcotics and hallucinogens were a basic staple of Crowley's magical diet, as the y e xist in esoteric cer emonies of se veral r eligions. Cr owley recorded using these drugs in his *Confessions*, as well as in the published portions of his Magical R ecord. Within the world of magick, it is well known that it is easier to induce astr al vision when one alternately dulls and e xcites the senses b y chemical means . Indeed, the role of drugs in magick is common, and it is fairly certain they were a part of the Babalon Working. In *The Book of Law*, (AL II:22), for example, Cr owley wrote, "To worship me [Nuit] tak e wine and str ange drugs whereof I will tell my prophet, & be drunk thereof!" In addition, Helen Parsons Smith told an intervie wer that Parsons got into drugs after their split in 1943, the same year he wrote his Don Quixote poem and three years before the Babalon Working. Apparently she had been his anchor to r eality, and, once she w as gone, he was wide open to just about anything. She continued to follo w the path of white magick, she said, while he turned do wn another, darker path.

Parsons' drug use also manifests itself in "Nar cissus," one of his poems

from his later collection *Songs for the Witch Woman*, which is dedicated to Cameron, the woman Parsons would claim to be the elemental he had purportedly inv oked during the Babalon W orking. “Narcissus” reads:

Drug me with drugs
Slow acting, sensuous, sweet,
Co-mingle gin and musk,
Hashish and amber,
Let me drink and breathe
And hear slow, devious music
Until aroused
To subtle, languorous moods,
Until I see
Ochre and mazarine and purple
Emit lascivious sounds.
Then I shall go
Through dark and gothic ruins,
Gray and golden mists
Down to a forest, green
With an old dream.
I shall go naked
And magnolia and oleander
Datura and jasmine,
When blossoms will open and vaginally flower
In infinite time, for a relative hour,
Whose white, subliminal flowers
Will caress my breasts.
And I shall perform stately
Phallic arabesques
In the moonlight,
Pale and white.

The possibly drug-enhanced w orking continued the e vening of January 5, when Parsons noted “a strong windstorm beginning suddenly about the middle of the fir st invocation,” which was no surprise, as EXARP is the Angel of the *Air* Tablet. In writing, the “ *first* invocation,” Parsons was referring to the fact that he r epeated the entire rite after finishing it the fir st

time. The entire process took a full two hours, such that Parsons must have been reciting at break-neck speed to finish so soon.

On January 6, Parsons continued the invocation, which means he ran through the entire rite twice. The windstorm also continued. On January 7, he inv oked twice mor e, and the wind subsided. A t this point he began pla ying Ser gei Pr okofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 2* as background music; the actual r ecording of which is still a vailable to the diligent searcher. [26]

The w orking continued, and on January 8 P arsons wr ote, "Invoked twice, using blood" (pr esumably as a substitute for the "material basis" of January 4, or else applied to the W and directly à la Crowley's *Mass of the Phoenix*).

On January 9, he wr ote, "Inv oked twice, r eplenishing material basis," which evidently means he did not apply the "material basis" (semen) to the talisman (the little par chment square) on the nights of the 5th through the 8th. In this se x magick, it seems he "inv oked the w and" (gained an er ection) but deliber ately denied himself release so the secr etions (sperm) created would be absorbed b y the body, a pr actice found in tantr a. This "magical masturbation" w as evidently carried out in front of the Scribe, i.e., Hubbard.

On January 1 0, Parsons invoked twice and r etired to bed ar ound 11 p.m. He was awakened at midnight b y nine loud, une xplainable knocks.[27] When Parsons got out of bed to inv estigate the knocks, he noticed a lamp la y smashed on the floor , which should ha ve been taken as an omen, as it is not the desired result and represents a magical misdirection of energy. Parsons recognized as much in his record, but continued regardless. Considering Hubbard was the Scribe during this ritual, it is an interesting coincidence that HUBARD means "living lamps" in Enochian, as is the fact that a knock ed-over lamp features in Dee and Kelley's enterprise as well.

On January 11, Parsons wrote, "Invoked twice, using blood," and on the 12th, "Inv oked twice. A heavy windstorm." The inv ocations and the windstorm both continued on the 13th.

January 14 w as the second-to-last da y of the w orking—a v ery interesting day. As Parsons began invoking at 9 p.m., the electricity went out. Parsons records that "another magician who had been staying in the house and

studying with me w as carrying a candle across the kitchen when he w as struck str ongly on the right shoulder, and the candle knocked out of his hand." According to Cameron and others, this other magician was Hubbard, which is odd in that Hubbar d was consistently referred to as "Scribe" throughout Parsons' record of the Babalon Working, rather than "magician," indicating the r ecord may have been garbled here.

> He [the other "magician"] called us [the "us" appar ently referring to Parsons and some unknown other] and we observed a brownish yellow light about seven feet high in the kitchen. I banished with a magical sword, and it disappeared. His [the other magician's] right arm was paralyzed for the rest of the night.

The final day was January 15, when Parsons wrote:

> At this time the Scribe [Hubbar d] developed some sor t of astral vision, describing in details an old enemy of mine of whom he had never heard [Captain Kynette, the car-bombing cop?], and later the guardian for ms of Isis and the Ar changel Michael. Later , in my room, I heard the [nine] raps again, and a buzzing, metallic voice crying "let me go fr ee." I felt a gr eat pressure and tension in the house that night, which was also noticed by the other occupants. There was no other phenomena, and I admit a feeling of disappointment.

Parsons sleepily performed the License to Depart, and the spirit was free to return to its home. In his r ecord of the w orking Parsons wrote that the "tension and unease continued for four days" and that he didn't know what to do next.

Around this time , Jane W olfe wrote to Cr owley, "Last e vening, when Jack brought me these various papers for me to post to y ou, I saw, for the first time, the small boy, or child. This is it that is bewildered, does not quite kno w when to tak e hold in this matter , or where, and is completely bowled over by the ruthlessness of Smith—Smith, who has a master hand when it comes to dealing with this boy."

Also around this time, Wilfr ed Smith described his o wn state to Crowley:

Ill started, ill maintained, ill ter minated. The shrine is desolate of the divine; has ever been; and I am completely empty; so much so, I do not know if I write accurately about myself. In fact I don't know anything at all. Have nothing; am nothing . . .

The worst of it is, I have some years yet to go and the prospect of having to live with myself is—I assur e you—not at all pleasant. For I can't see but that my brain will continually flog me till I go to sleep once and for all. I have ill understood your dealings with me these many years, and I am no better infor med at this moment.

And Parsons wrote Crowley, "I have diligently followed the VIIIth Degree instructions as (a) creation of new orders of beings with consecrated talismanic images . P ossible connectiv e r esult: incr ease in writing output [a r eference to *Freedom Is A Two-Edged Sword*?]; (b) Invocation of Mother Goddess , using Priest' s call in [Gnostic] mass and silver cup as talisman [for the material basis?]; sometimes using suitable poetry such as V enus. P ossible connectiv e result: loss of Betty's affections as pr eliminary to (c) Inv ocation of Air Elemental Kerub [Cherub] . . . in Enochian Air Tablet." The "suitable poetry" is not r ecorded in his account of the w orking. The rite ended with Parsons commanding the elemental to appear in human form.

The "Kerub of the Air" of Air quadr ant is called ERZLA. There are four Kerubs for each of the four Tablets, and 12 Lesser Kerubic Angels and 16 Lesser Angels for each as w ell, part of the complicated (but highly structured) system.

The Priest's Call in the Gnostic Mass is a short recitation in Greek that the Priest makes when the Priestess is behind the v eil. It apparently was a preliminary to the lengthy rites of the Babalon W orking (24 complete inv ocations in 12 da ys!) and is a call to the cr eative power of the Priest as represented by his "lance" (i.e., phallus). The call is:

IO IO IO IAO SABAO KYRIE ABRASAX KYRIE MEITHRAS KYRIE PHALLE. IO PAN, IO PAN PAN, IO ISCHYROCH, IO A THANATON, IO ABROTON , IO IAO. CHAIRE PHALLE CHAIRE P AN PHAGE CHAIRE PANGENETOR. AGIOS, AGIOS, AGIOS IAO, *which is* O, O, O, IAO, Sabao, Lord Abrasax, Lor d Mithras, Lor d Phallus. O Pan, O Pan Pan, O Str ong One, O Immor tal One, O Divine One, O IAO. Hail Phallus, Hail All-

Devourer, Hail All-Begetter. Holy, Holy, Holy IAO.

Iao, Sabao, and Abr asax ar e Gr eek deities with long histories: They are solar in nature, and the rising sun is the Phallus invoked in the call.

Following the working, Parsons was at first despondent: “Nothing seems to have happened. The windstorm is very interesting, but that is not what I ask ed for,” he wrote Crowley. On January 18, P arsons and Hubbard went into the Mojave Desert to relax. At sunset the feeling of tension suddenly left P arsons, and he turned to Hubbar d “in absolute certainty that the oper ation w as accomplished” and said simply, “It is done ,” echoing Jesus’ “It is finished” spok en on the cross.

At this time, Grady McMurtry, whom Parsons met at a science fic-tion meeting, r eturned fr om England and mo ved to San F rancisco with the intent of starting a lodge there. He spent the week of January 14th to the 2 0th at 1 003 S. Or ange Grove, interviewing the v arious members of the lodge to determine what w as going on and what could be done about it. Cr owley had sent him in to see if ther e was any w ay to fix the mess he had been hearing about. McMurtry’ s report is dated January 25 and includes signed statements fr om Parsons and several others. Parsons was surprised to see McMurtry , who had left as an inferior in the Or der, return as his superior.

McMurtry told Cr owley that Parsons was “. . . a man of integrity and aspiration, all he lacks is an e xperienced instructor. He is easily the outstanding personality of the whole gr oup.” He also mentioned a new female interest of Parsons’ named Helen Parker, but apparently nothing of note developed between the two.

McMurtry’s report found the lodge in a messas many of the members were bickering about almost everything, yet he saw hope for the future. Parsons, he said, w as “shaking the debris of A gape from his shoulders and preparing to make a clean start with a more ambitious program than ever. A lesser man would have washed his hands of the whole affair.”

McMurtry further outlined a pr ogram of adv ertising, initiation, training, and performance of the Gnostic Mass as the immediate needs of the lodge . Parsons wanted to incorpor ate the OTO, which McMurtry endorsed. Parsons would stay in Pasadena with the Agape Lodge, while McMurtry would return to San F rancisco and open the Thelema Lodge. This plan did not materialize

until 1977, long after Parsons' death.

Parsons w anted to pur sue the adv ertising campaign as a "Synagogue of Satan"; McMurtry thought this angle w as fine for some but not all-inclusive. He wanted to pursue a less sensationalistic campaign in San F rancisco, modeled after the Abbe y of Thelema in Cefalu, Sicily.

McMurtry closes b y referring to A gape Lodge as "Hodge P odge Lodge," which he sa ys the r esidents of 1 003 S. Or ange Grove call "Ghastly Gables ." Neither title is flattering. P arsons' attached statement says that he sold the big home to finance an e xplosives manufacturing plant, such that he e vidently didn't o wn the house v ery long. Another member, Max Schneider, with whom Parsons seems to have been bickering the most, said Parsons was trying to "combine a Lodge, a pr ofess house, and a r ooming house for thrill seek ers all under one roof." The other statements speak well of Parsons, but say that the influence of Smith was still too strong.

One interesting remark was made b y Roy Leffingw ell, who told McMurtry that P arsons w as "impr egnating statuettes with a vital force by invocation, and then selling the statuettes ." He further said that Parsons reminded him "of the y oung Crowley—he is so set on overturning the present system that he will stop at nothing." No mention is made of the Babalon Working in any of McMurtry's reports.

Parsons' disappointment at the r esults of the w orking had been alleviated by the ne xt month, when, on F ebruary 23, 1946, he triumphantly wrote to Cr owley, "I ha ve my elemental! She turned up one night after the conclusion of the Oper ation, and has been with me since, although she goes back to Ne w York next week. She has red hair and slant gr een eyes as specified. She is an artist, str ongminded and determined, with strong masculine characteristics and a fanatical independence. If she returns she will be dedicated as I am dedicated!"

The elemental w as Marjorie Elizabeth Camer on, sprung fr om Parsons' head lik e Sophia from the Godhead or P allas A thena from Zeus. She actually arriv ed at the lodge befor e Parsons left for the desert with Hubbar d. McMurtry had just left, and the Babalon Working w as still in pr ogress (but w as not kno wn to Camer on). Cameron came back tw o weeks later after some friends of P arsons tracked her do wn at the emplo yment office. This

time she came to stay.

Parsons described Cameron as an “air of fire type with bronze red hair, fiery and subtle, determined and obstinate, sincere and perverse, with e xtraordinary per sonality, talent, and intelligence .” She remained in the dark about the Babalon W orking until long after it was finished—even though she w as to participate in its ne xt phase. Parsons made her a pr otective talisman, which she w ore around her neck for years until police took it a way because it had a potent poison sealed inside.

Parsons exultantly wrote in his notes that Camer on answered all the requirements of the elemental he had inv oked. She adopted the magical name “Candida” (the Latin root of “candid”), calling herself “Candy” for short. He wr ote that she “demonstr ated the natur e of woman to y ou [referring to himself] in such unequiv ocal terms that you [Parsons] should have no further r oom for illusion on the subject.” Parsons and Cameron would marry in October of that year, just eight months later. Shortly after they met, the ever-romantic Parsons composed a poem for her, “Witch Woman,” which opens his poetry collection *Songs for the Witch Woman*:

I hear your voice low in the dusk
Like the notes of the harp player
That carve the still air
Into a sensuous and subtle imager y of sound.

And my senses are drowned
By the scent of the oleander and the musk
Of the datura dimly shining in the dark,
While your voice troubles the still air,
And I recall
An ancient garden and a secret call
And your slant eyes and your red hair
Engender dreams of days beyond despair.

And under your sorcery I fare forth
To fabulous lands and meadows green with Spring

And caught on the gossamer web of evening
I behold incredible things no poet ever told.

Marjorie Cameron was born on April 23, 1922 in Belle Plain, Iowa, which is located in Benton County in east centr al Iowa. Her parents were Hill Lislie Camer on, originally fr om Illinois , and Carrie V . Ridenour, a nativ e of Io wa. Camer on actually gr ew up in northern Wisconsin, " a country of fer ocious gr andeur." When she met Parsons, she was 5′5", 126 pounds, fair-complected with freckles, red hair and blue (not green) eyes. An "air of fire type," as Parsons called her, is typically a Leo in the Enochian s ystem (on the Fir e Tablet rather than the Air T ablet), and is associated with the Prince of Wands in the Tarot.

Cameron had served in the WAVES during WWII, at which time she had been stationed in W ashington, D.C. She had also serv ed as an aide to the Joint Chiefs of Staff ther e, after entering the Na vy as an Apprentice Seaman on December 9, 1942 at Chicago, Illinois . She was honorably discharged from Washington, D.C. as a photographer on November 16, 1945, after which she moved to Los Angeles, where one of her Na vy friends took her to the A gape Lodge. Interestingly, Cameron, Hubbard and Heinlein were all in the Navy. A Freedom of Information Act request revealed that the FBI had no file on her.

From January 19 (the very day Cameron arrived!) to February 27, Parsons daily recorded that he "inv oked the Goddess BABALON with the aid of m y magical partner, as was proper to one of m y grade." The magical partner was, of course, Cameron, though some writers have tried to make it Hubbard, who was in actuality not present. The grade Parsons referred to is the IX° of the OTO, a rite inv olving sexual intercourse in much the w ay that the VIII° involves masturbation. However, Parsons evidently never held this grade, nor was this a IX° working, based on the w ay Crowley ran the higher gr ades in the 1940s. At that time, Agape Lodge was the only oper ating lodge of the OTO. Members there could request the grade, as it w ere, and Crowley w ould confirm their right to w ork it despite the fact that they had not attained the intermediate grades. However, just because a few members were working with the IX° material does not mean they could demonstr ate attainment, as ther e w ere no other legitimate IX° members present to guide them and confirm their r esults. The Babalon Working in particular was far too

unorthodox to have been a part of this degr ee; it was specially designed by Parsons for this one purpose.

According to Camer on, the rite consisted of her and P arsons spending two weeks in bed. Unfortunately, Parsons did not record the details of his daily inv ocations, or if he did the y have not survived. Cameron said the two talked incessantly: “He educated me . . . that’s what he w as supposed to do.” She also r elated that he made her aware she “had a mission in the world.” Of course, she was ignorant of the entire Babalon Working, of which she was supposed to be the elemental invoked, until well past its completion.

On F ebruary 27, Camer on w ent back to Ne w York to visit her boyfriend, a photogr apher named Napoleon, spending tw o w eeks there, during which time she dumped him. She later said she returned to Pasadena when she disco vered she was pregnant by Parsons. The day after she left for New York, Parsons returned to the Mojave Desert without Hubbard, who had gone a way for awhile, perhaps to the VA hospital in San Francisco. Parsons invoked Babalon in the desert, presumably through a solo sexual rite of some sort, though he does not say. What r esulted was phenomenal: “The pr esence of the Goddess came upon me ,” he wr ote, “and I w as commanded to write the following communication.”

The communication Parsons was commanded to write w as *Liber 49*, often mistakenly referred to as *The Book of Babalon* , of which it is only a part. *Liber 49* is too long to reproduce here, but it has been reproduced widely in print and on the internet in unauthorized v ersions. The communication falls w ell outside the orthodo xy of the OTO’s system, their test of its genuineness and spiritual coher ence being its claim to be the fourth chapter of *Liber AL*—which is described internally as “threefold.” [28]

Parsons took *Liber 49* to be an affirmation of the need to pr oduce a “magical child.” *Liber 49* has 77 verses: The se ven-pointed star is sacred to Babalon (which has seven letters), and 7 × 7 = 49, a number also sacred to Babalon. Besides being two sevens side-by-side, 77 is 7 × 11, and 11, as we have already seen, is the number of Crowley’s magick.

Parsons came to see *Liber 49* as the fourth chapter of *The Book of the Law*. Parsons saw the four chapters as corresponding to the four letters of the ineffable name of God: YHWH, the Hebrew *Yod Hé Vau Hé*. He assigned

one chapter to each letter and to what each letter represented: F ather, Mother , Son, Daughter , or God, Holy Ghost, Christ, and the gnostic Sophia, the *Puer, Vir, Puella, Mulier* of *Liber 36*.

Of the 77 original v erses of *Liber 49*, 73 survive. *Liber 49* begins:

1. Yea, it is I, BABALON.
2. And this is my book, that is the four th chapter of the *Book of the Law* , Hé completing the Name, for I am out of NUIT by HORUS, the incestuous sister of RA-HOOR-KHUIT.

Five of the surviving verses mention fire, flame or burning, which seems appropriate for a man w orking with r ockets and e xplosives. Three mention the "Black Pilgrimage ," which w e will also discuss later. Two mention the number 1 1, albeit one incorr ectly: Verse 65 calls it the number of a witches' co ven, but that number is 13. References to Cr owley's w ork, especially *The Book of the Law* , abound, and those familiar with that w ork will find this one eas y enough to interpret.

Verses 28 and 29 r efer to Cr owley's *Liber Astarte*, with the statement that the w orking is of "nine moons ." *Liber A starte vel Berylli sub figura CLXXV* is "The Book of Uniting Himself to a Particular Deity by Devotion" and is r eproduced in Cr owley's Magick, but not in *Magick in Theory and Pr actice.* The deity in P arsons' case w as Babalon. There is no timefr ame specified in the book, but Babalon' s purported message to Parsons regarding a nine-month working seems excessive, and there is certainly no surviving record to bear this out. Parsons may have interpreted this nine-month figure to mean that the working in this case involved a magical birth rather than a literal one.

Verse 48 reads, "Now is the hour of birth at hand. No w shall m y adept be crucified in the Basilisk abode ," a r eference to Cr owley's Magus initiation from 1916. One of the entries in Cr owley's magical record for the period r eads, "He hath crucified a toad in his basilisk abode," reflecting the time Cr owley christened a frog "Jesus," crucified it, then ate its legs and burned the r est. This incident w as a ritual affirmation of the super session of what Cr owley called "the slave-gods."

The "basilisk abode" refers to the womb, as tradition held that the basilisk, or "legendary reptile with fatal breath and glance," was born of menstrual blood. In Greek, *basileos* means "king," and the frog is a symbol of

transition, living as it does in two worlds (water and dry land).

Two chapters survive of P arsons' original *The Book of Babalon* . One, "The Star of Babalon," is in *Freedom Is A Two-Edged Sword*. It consists of dir ections from Babalon to the e xpected Magical Child, and is not to be confused with P arsons' r ecord of the Babalon Working. The other chapter consists of quotes from a secret OTO document of the VIII°.

eight

The Babalon Working, Part 2: March 1946

In March 1946, the r ed-haired elemental Camer on r eturned fr om Ne w Y ork and mo ved in with Parsons. She w as to be an integr al part of the Babalon W orking, though did not kno w it at the time . She did feel lik e she w as in the middle of something, so much so that she felt as if she w ere “sp ying.” Parsons wrote that he kne w not in whom Babalon w as incarnate, but Cameron said he had been w arned in the desert not to tell her it w as she . To prove herself to him, Camer on would provide a sign, which she claimed w as her sighting of a silv er, cigar-shaped UFO. This incident was the only time the two ever discussed UFOs, she said. She actually derided his magick at the time, but later proved to herself that it worked.

On March 1, P arsons again pr epared the altar and the v arious magical weapons, this time “in accor dance with the instructions in *Liber 49*.” What changed? In verses 18 through 22, Babalon specifies sandalwood incense, a gr een and gold cloth to co ver the altar, her book *(Liber 49)* and the other magical implements , including a three-inch copper disk with the sevenfold Star of Babalon painted in gold on a blue back ground, which w as to be the ne w talisman, replacing the parchment talisman of the original Enochian rite . The talisman was to be anointed in much the same w ay, although this time with the se xual secr etions of both partner s—Parsons and Cameron.

The operation began as directed on March 2, when Hubbard, who had been away since the 27th or 28th of F ebruary, returned with a description of “a vision he had that e vening of a savage and beautiful woman riding naked on a great cat-like beast,” Parsons wrote. “He [Hubbard] w as impr essed with the ur gent necessity of giving me [Parsons] some message or communication. W e prepared magically for this communication, constructing a temple at the altar with the analysis of the key word [INRI]. He was robed in white, carrying the lamp, and I in black, hooded, with the cup and dagger [tw o of the magical weapons]. At his suggestion w e played

Rachmaninoff's 'Isle of the Dead' as background music, and set an automatic r ecorder to transcribe an y audible occurr ences. A t appr oximately 8 p.m. he began to dictate, I transcribing directly as I received." [29]

After Parsons' initial contact with the astral plane during this second working, Hubbar d began acting as seer , although Parsons continued to call him "Scribe" in his notes , and it was actually he who was "scrying in the A ethyr" while P arsons took notes . In r egard to Hubbard's vision of the catlike beast and naked woman, it should be recalled that Crowley repeatedly referred to the Beast and his Scarlet Woman in the Book of Revelation, which Crowley identified as himself and his curr ent consort, corr esponding also to the Gnostic-Christian her esiarch Simon Magus and his Helen. The w oman was Sophia incarnate, and Hubbar d's vision was once again seen as the cover picture for the fir st edition of Williamson' s *Darker Than Y ou Think* (from 1948).

It is uncertain whether or not the tape recording of the March 1946 session still e xists, but the incr edible transcript has surviv ed, ho wever, quoted here verbatim, since a summary would not do it justice. The w ords ar e Hubbar d's, or r ather, Babalon speaking thr ough Hubbard as recorded by Parsons:

The Angel of TARO[30]. A three-day retirement to greet her [Babalon]. Purify thyself. The symbol is seven by thr ee.[31] It is BABALON. Keep secret. The communications are sacred.

These are the preparations. Green gold cloth, food for the Beast [Crowley], upon a hidden platter , back of the altar . Disrobe only when the doors are bolted.

Transgression is death.

Back of main altar . Prepare instantly. Light the first flame at 10 p.m., March 2, 1946.

The year of BABALON is 4063.[32]

Beware of the use of profaned rituals.

She is flame of life, power of darkness, she destr oys with a glance, she may take thy soul. She feeds upon the death of men.

Beautiful—Horrible.

The first ritual. T omorrow the second ritual. Concentrate all force and being in Our Lady BABALON. Light a single light on Her altar, saying: Flame is Our Lady, flame is Her hair. I am flame.

A plate of food, unsalted. An altar cloth hither to undefiled.

Make a box of blackness at ten o'clock. Smear the vessel which contains flame [Camer on?] with thine own blood. Destr oy at the altar a thing of value. [33] Remain in per fect silence, and heed the voice of Our Lady. Speak not of this ritual or of Her coming to any person. If asked, answer in a manner that avoids suspicion. Nor speculate at any time as to Her futur e mortal identity. To receive flattering communications to thy damnation. Pr ess not to r eceive teachings beyond those given.

Questions you may ask but thr ee. Spend one half hour in composing these at 11:30 p.m. The answers must be written at midnight.

Thou shalt take the alkahest [34] in thine own mouth, and in the box of darkness carefully store this matter.

Display thyself to Our Lady; dedicate thy [sex] or gans to Her, dedicate thy hear t to Her, dedicate thy mind to Her , dedicate thy soul to Her, for She shall absorb thee, and thou shalt become living flame before She incarnates. For it shall be through you alone, and no one else can help in this endeavor .

It is lonely, it is awful.

Retire from human contact until noon tomor row. Clear all pr o-fane documents on the mor row, before receiving further instr uctions. Consult no book but thine own mind. Thou art a god. Behave at this altar as one god before another. And so be prosperity.

Thou ar t the guar dian and thou ar t the guide, thou ar t the worker and the mechanic. So conduct thyself. Discuss nothing of this matter until thou ar t cer tain that thine understanding embraces all.

Upon the completion of Babalon' s message, Parsons immediately set about following the instructions dictated by her, as well as those received the night before (March 1), although he did not record what those instructions were.

As a part of this March 2 ceremony, he recited passages from several key works of Crowley's and elsewhere, passages that are vital to understanding

the rite:

1. The Lesser Ritual of the Hexagram.
2. Excerpt from the Gnostic Mass.
3. Excerpt from Crowley's *The Vision and the Voice.*
4. A short verse dedicated to Babalon.
5. The Key Call of the Seventh Air e.
6. Excerpt from Crowley's *Tannhäuser*.

Parsons opened with an esoteric analy sis of what he called "the key w ord," INRI, which is a part of the "Lesser Ritual of the Hexagram" he actually performed, though he did not r ecord the fact by name and only wrote "analysis of the key word." He probably also performed the other rituals of the He xagram and Pentagram, but he does not say.

Parsons recorded the analy sis of the k ey word as follo ws: "The temple is opened with the analy sis of the k ey word: INRI. *Yod Nun Resh Yod*. Virgo Isis Mighty Mother. Scorpio Apophis Destr oyer. Sol, Osiris slain and risen. IAO. The sign of Osiris slain (giv en). The sign of the mourning of Isis (giv en). The sign of Apophis and T yphon (given). L.V. X., Lux, the Light of the Cr oss."

During the ritual, the magician must adopt at each stage of the analysis certain postures. Crossed arms, for example, represent Osiris slain, as the posture a corpse takes during burial. The entire ritual is recorded by Crowley in *Magick* and elsewhere. The gods invoked are Egyptian gods.

INRI is not a word but an acronym, representing the initials of the message Pontius Pilate had nailed upon the cross in the gospel story: *Iesus Nazaraeus Rex Iudaeorum*, Latin for "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The acronym is often seen depicted in paintings of the crucifixion, possibly arising as a painter' s e xpedient. Medieval clerics manipulated the letters to find different phrases that described Jesus while conforming to the same acronym.

Mystics and alchemists found other, less orthodox interpretations as well. In *Morals and Dogma*, Albert Pike gives a few possible meanings of INRI, withholding the one which he sa ys Masons learn when they attain the 18th degr ee of Scottish Rite F reemasonry, known as Knight Rose Croix (Rose Cross). The meanings Pik es does give are: *Igne Natura Renovatur Integr a*

(All of Natur e is R enewed b y Fire); *Igne Nitrum Roris Invenitur* (The Cleanser of Fire Comes Like Dew); and the Jesuits' alleged *Iustum Necare Reges Impius* (To Judge not but the Impiety of Royalty).[35]

In the Golden Da wn the analy sis of INRI was part of the 5° = 6 material. Cr owley records a few of the interpr etations in his *Sepher Sephiroth* ("Book of Books"): *Igni Natura Renovata Regnum* (Birth by Fire R enews the Kingdom), *Intra Nobis R egnum deI* (Within the Noble is the Kingdom of God), and e ven *Isis Natur ae R egina Ineffabilis* (Isis, the Ineffable Queen of Natur e). This last interpr etation may be the one Pike chose to withhold; it also hearkens back to John Dee and Queen Elizabeth.

In the gospel tale , the original message w as posted in thr ee languages: Latin, Ar amaic (Hebrew), and *koine* Greek. *Yod Nun R esh Yod* are the Hebrew names for the letters INRI. They are also words in the Hebrew tongue: hand-fish-head-hand, respectively. Each of these has further esoteric meanings that could be e xpanded indefinitely. The hand, for instance, represents the creative force, as it is with our hands that we build tools, heal the sick, express our love. *Yod* is also Hebrew slang for "penis ," another sort of cr eative power. *Nun*, the fish, is Scorpio, hence death. *Resh* is the back of the head, and looks like a lar ge *yod*; for this r eason Crowley associated it with the *kundalini* , the mysterious energy source in yoga that runs along the spine and out the top of the head. A whole treatise could be written on the analysis of INRI; the same could be said of TARO, which Babalon mentioned on March 2.

The analysis complete, the invoking hexagrams are drawn in the air in the four car dinal directions (representing the four elements), and the name ARARITA "vibrated" in each quarter . When one "vibrates" a name, it is not merely spoken but visualized as written, originating within the magician and going outw ard until it fills the entire universe. ARARITA is also mentioned in the Star-Sapphire ritual from *The Book of Lies* and is a Hebrew acronym for one of the names of God.

The second part of Parsons' invocation is from the Gnostic Mass, recited as the Priest steps onto the fir st step leading to the altar, and as the Priestess disr obes behind the v eil. Parsons recited the part of the Priest, and Camer on (representing Babalon) r ecited the part of the Priestess:

THE PRIEST: “O cir cle of Stars [the Milky W ay] whereof our Father [the sun] is but the younger br other, marvel beyond imagination, soul of infinite space, befor e whom T ime is ashamed, the mind bewildered, and the understanding dark, not unto Thee may we attain, unless Thine image be Love. Ther efore by seed and r oot and stem and bud and leaf and flower and fruit do we invoke thee.” [Parsons deleted the second par t of this invocation, which is a quote of AL I:27].

THE PRIESTESS [here Parsons actually wr ote “BABALON”]: “But to love me is better than all things; if under the night-stars in the desert thou presently burnest mine incense befor e me, invoking me with a pur e heart and the Serpent flame [kundalini] ther ein, thou shalt come a little to lie in my bosom. For one kiss wilt thou then be willing to give all. But whoso gives one par ticle of dust shall lose all in that hour . Ye shall gather goods and stor e of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of earth in splendour and pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy . I char ge you ear nestly to come before me in a single r obe, and cover ed with a rich head dress. I love you! I year n to you! Pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous, I who am all pleasure and purple, and drunkenness of the innermost sense, desir e you. Put on the wings, and ar ouse the coiled splendour [kundalini] within you: come unto me! T o me! To me! Sing the raptur ous love-song unto me! Bur n to me per fume! Drink to me, for I love you! I love you! I am the blue-lidded daughter of Sunset, I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night sky. To me! To me!”

This priestess’s recitation is an expansion of AL I:61.

The third part of the invocation comes from Crowley’s *The Vision and the Voice* and was part of his w orking of the 12th Air e in 1909, spoken to Crowley by a celestial “charioteer”:

Glory unto the Scarlet W oman, BABALON [36] the Mother of Abominations, that rideth upon the Beast, for She hath spilt their blood in every corner of the ear th, and lo! She hath mingled it in the cup of Her whoredom.

With the breath of Her kisses hath she fermented it, and it hath become the wine of the Sacrament; the wine of the Sabbath; and in the Holy Assembly hath She pour ed it out for Her worshippers; and they have become dr unken

thereon, so that face to face they beheld my Father. Thus ar e they made wor thy to par take of the Mystery of this holy vessel, for the blood is the life.

Beautiful art thou O BABALON, and desirable, for thou hast given Thyself to ever ything that liveth, and thy weakness hath subdued their strength. For in that union Thou didst *understand*. Therefore art Thou called Understanding, O BABALON, Lady of the Night!

O my God, in one last rapture let me attain to the union with the many. For She is Love, and Her Love is one, and She has divided the one love into infinite loves, and each love is one, and equal with the One, and therefore is She passed from the Assembly and the Law and the enlightenment into the anar chy of solitude and darkness. For ever thus must She veil the brilliance of Herself.

Parsons actually abbr eviated this passage , as he did with the excerpt from the Gnostic Mass , and did not r ecite it v erbatim. It is longer in the original.

The fourth inv ocation was, " O BABALON, BABALON beloved, come now, partake of the sacrament, possess this shrine. Take me now! Let me be drunken on the wine of your fornications; let your kisses wanton me to death. Accept thou this sacrifice willingly given!" This passage seems to ha ve been an original v erse by Parsons, not found anywhere in the works of Crowley.

The fifth inv ocation was written as the K ey Call of the Se venth Aire, but the text Parsons recorded is actually the Se venth Call, e vidently the same type of shift P arsons made when he wr ote that he used the "K ey Call of the Thir d Aire" but actually utilized the Thir d Call. The Seventh Call in English is:

The East is a house of Virgins singing praises among the flames of first glory [the rising sun] wherein the Lord hath opened his mouth; and they are become 28 living dwellings [the phases of the moon, hence days] in whom the str ength of man r ejoiceth; and they ar e apparelled with ornaments of brightness, such as work wonders on all creatures. Whose kingdoms and continuance ar e as the Thir d and Fourth [Aires], strong towers and places of comfort, the Seats of Mercy and Continuance. O ye Servants of Mercy, Move! Appear! Sing praises unto the Creator; and be mighty amongst us. For that to this r emembrance is given power , and our str ength waxeth strong in our Comforter!

The following is the original Enochian, in Roman letters. Although the words are the same , Parsons' spellings v ary considerably from those recorded by Crowley.

> Ra-asa isalamanu para-di-zoda oe-cari-mi aao iala-pire-gahe Qui-inu. Enai butamonu od inoasa ni pa-ra-diala. Casar emeji ujeare cahirelanu, od zodonace lucifatianu, car esa ta vavale-zodir enu tol-hami. Soba lonudohe od nuame cahisa ta Da o Desa vo-ma-dea od pibeliare itahila rita od miame ca-ni-quola rita! Zodocar e! Zodameranu! Iecarimi Quo-a-dahe od I-mica-ol-zododa aaiome. Bajirele papenor e idalugama elonusahi—od umapelifa vau-ge-ji Bijil—IAD!"

The original ends with "IAD," which means "God" (Crowley translated it " comforter," which usually r efers to the Holy Spirit). In Parsons' notes he has replaced "IAD" with "BABALON."

The sixth invocation was from Crowley's play *Tannhäuser,* alternating v erses originating with the w orshiper and his goddess . A Wagnerian opera, *Tannhäuser* was based on a 13th-century German epic poem. The main character, Tannhäuser, was a mortal who spent some time as the goddess V enus' lo ver but e ventually left her to return to earth and the sweetheart of his youth. Tannhäuser inadvertently reveals his try st with Venus, a disclosur e that means certain death. His mortal love, Elisabeth, pleads for his life, and he is spared but banished as punishment for his deed. Alone, he longs for Venus. She hear s him, and is about to r eturn him to her when Elisabeth intervenes once again. T annhäuser is r edeemed, and is escorted b y angels to paradise.

Here again, P arsons and Camer on pr obably took turns r eciting their respective lines. Parsons played the part of T annhäuser, while Cameron was Venus. Parsons began the romantic interlude:

Isis art thou, and from thy life are fed
All showers and suns, all moons that wax and wane,
All stars and streams, the living and the dead,
The mystery of pleasure and of pain
Thou art the mother, thou the speaking sea
Thou art the earth, and its fertility,
Life, death, love, hatred, light, darkness return to thee

To Thee!

Hathoor am I, and to my beauty drawn
All glories of the Universe bow down,
The blossom and the mountain and the dawn
Fruits blush, and women, our creations crown
I am the priest[ess], the sacrifice, the shrine
I the love and life of the divine
Life, death, love, hatred, light, darkness are surely mine, Are Mine!

Venus art thou, the love and light of ear th,
The wealth of kisses, the delight of tears
The barren pleasures never came to birth,
The endless infinite delight of years.
Thou art the shrine at which my long desire
Devoured me with intolerable fire.
Thou wert song, music, passion, death upon my lyr e—
My lyre.

I am the Grail and I the glor y now;
I am the flame and fuel of thy br east
I am the star of God upon thy br ow;
I am the queen, enraptured and possessed,
Hide thee sweet river, welcome to thee, sea
Ocean of love that shall encompass thee
Life, death, love, hatred, light, darkness return to me—
To me!

After the completed invocation, which was more like a bard's love poem, Parsons burned the Enochian Air T ablet he had used in the January stage of this w orking. He then smashed a small statue of Pan, which had been a fa vorite possession. He r ecorded that at the same instant the r oof on his guest house caught fir e and w as damaged, apparently attributing this destruction to supernatur al forces, although the burning parchment may have had

something to do with it as well.

Regarding such sacrifices as the smashed statue , Crowley's *Liber Astarte*, verse 37, reads:

Having made by thine Ingenium a talisman or pantacle to represent the particular Deity, and consecrated it with infinite love and car e, do thou burn it ceremonially before the shrine, as if thereby giving up the shadow for the substance. But it is useless to do this unless thou do really in thine hear t value the talisman beyond all else that thou hast.

Crowley noted in his *Confessions*, "I have noticed that every time I receive an important initiation, some cherished article mysteriously disappears. It may be a pipe, a pen or what not: but it is alw ays an object which is impregnated with my personality by constant use or special veneration. I cannot r emember a single occasion when this has not happened. The theory is that the elementals or familiar spirits in attendance on the Magician e xact, so to speak, a tip on all important occasions of r ejoicing." In such magical w orkings, e vidently, if y ou don't offer something to the spirits , they will tak e it anyway.

At 11:30 p.m. that same night, P arsons prepared three questions as dir ected, and at midnight he ask ed them of Babalon (and w as answered through Hubbard).

> How can I communicate dir ectly with BABALON, hear her , see her, feel her, be sure that I am working aright?
>
> *At the altar in meditation, as you know how. Also, invoke me carnally with all your passion. Thus will you feel my desir e and increase my substance.*
>
> How can I ser ve best?
>
> *Follow instructions exactly and in detail. A void loose inter ruptions. Be diligent. Do not hesitate or question, act. All depends on your time.*
>
> How can I be certain of the vehicle [of incar nation]?
>
> *Do not trouble yourself with this. It does not concer n you. I will provide the vehicle, I will show you a sign, and signs. It is the now which concerns us. Keep your faith, think not over much.*

While meditating the following morning, Parsons was interrupted by one of his tenants , whom he then cur sed “in the Anglo-Sax on fashion.” The man became ill, and Parsons realized he had erred. He apologized to him, but the da y continued badly. That night Babalon purportedly continued her message, but the speaker, curiously, seems to be another (all parenthetical remarks are copied from the original):

In the presence of our Lord PAN, at the feet of Our Lady BABALON, at the feet of Her (servants?) (changing?) we declare unto thee this message (consecrated, dedicated, never to be defiled?) (the Scribe was uncertain here) containing the rituals of the second and thir d days, of the welcome and pr eparation in the Name of Our Lady of the N ight most gracious, to pur e lewd and whor esome Lady BABALON. Oh thou who ar t mortal tremble; given it is unto thee a feat never before performed in the annals of your histories, never before accomplished successfully . Many have dar ed, none succeeded.

Our Lady BABALON must descend to triumph.

Mortality. We have not asked this of another, nor shall we ever. Even now we doubt thy faith. Is this accepted, are you willing to proceed. Answer aloud.

I am willing.

Then know thou ar t alr eady faulty in thy deliver y. These ar e extraneous things. The elemental was not pr operly released (this was corrected), thou wert guilty of human rage, the current of force has been disturbed. Bewar e, shouldst thou falter again, we will sure slay thee.

But insofar as thy working was consecrated it has succeeded. Rectify thy mor tal fault and er ror. Consecrate all. Now r eceive the second and third rituals.

Consecrate thyself as instructor of Our Lady Incarnate.

Take the black box, concentrate upon its emptiness for one hour, gaze into it, and thou wilt see, imprinted upon it, a shape, a sign, a sacred design, which shall be the sign delivered by Our Lady Babalon Incarnate. When thou hast finished, when thou hast r ecognized this pattern, construct it in wood. [37]

This is the sigil.

Ten be the hour appointed. Invoke long, to music indicated. [38]

When thou canst feel Our Lady incar nate in thy being, take the black box and per form the consecrated rite. W ear thou scarlet, symbolic of birth. Be sashed in black. It matters not the quality of goods. Take then the box, make then the sign.

Paint upon it a second sign which thou knowest. If thou hast forgotten, gaze into thy crystal.

Meditate while gazing on the qualities of an instr uctor. Thou inscribe in Her book, for Her guidance.

Thou art forbidden to leave thy room.

The end of the second ritual.

At this point, Hubbard rested a while, then they continued.

Begin four hours prior to dawn.

A period of eradication of all inimical influences. Complete perfection. Wear black. Cut fr om thy breast the red star. Renew the blood. Lay out a white sheet. Place upon it blood of bir th[39], since She is born of thy flesh, and by thy mor tal power upon earth.

Thou shalt r ecognize by the sign. BABALON is born! It is new birth, all things ar e changed, the signs, the symbols, the ever ything!

Thou shalt compose with the aid of the muse suitable invocation of the bir th of BABALON, and this thou shalt deliver to the flames which now burn too.

This last instruction certainly refers to Parsons' poem, "The Birth of Babalon," which, fortunately for us, survived the flames. The mystical yet racy message continued:

Now thou shalt flame the third, chanting the invocation. She is born in the third flame.

In verse, seven verses of seven lines, seven magick wor ds. Stand and chant seven times. Envision thyself as a cloaked radiance desirable to the Goddess, beloved. Envision Her approaching thee. Embrace Her, cover Her with kisses. Think upon the lewd lascivious things thou couldst do. All is good to

BABALON. ALL.

Then rest, meditating on this:

Thou as a man and as a god hast str ewn about the ear th and in the heavens many loves; these r ecall, concentrate, consecrate each woman thou hast raped. Remember her think upon her, move her into BABALON, bring her into BABALON, each, one by one until the flame of lust is high.

Then compose a verse of undeter mined lines on this, to BABALON. This verse shall be used in worship when she appears . [40]

Then meditate upon thy desir e, think upon Her , and, touching naught, chant these verses. Recall each lascivious moment, each lustful day, all set them into the astral body, touching naught.

The part about " consecrating each w oman thou hast r aped" is likely not meant liter ally, and the instruction to "touch naught" e vidently r efers to a tantric pr actice, as does the entir e instruction, essentially. It resumes:

Preserve the material basis . [41]

In the box?

Yes.

The lust is hers, the passion yours. Consider thou the Beast raping.

Leave thy casual loves—all belongs to BABALON, thy lust is BABALON's. She is with thee thr ee days. The sign is hers, secr et, and no man knows its correspondence. Guard!

The instruction was followed by "a prophecy" of unknown length, which Parsons deliberately omitted recording.

Directly following the message , Parsons records instead a poem entitled "The Birth of Babalon" that he wr ote as a means b y which to invoke Babalon. It is unclear at which point in these pr oceedings he used it, but it ma y have been the seventh part of the inv ocation, as a six-fold invocation makes little sense here. Parsons also seems to have ignored the instructions to burn it, already noted.

A longish, well-composed poem, "The Birth of Babalon" begins:

What is the tumult among the stars that have shone so still till now?

What are the furrows of pain and wrath upon the immor tal brow?

Why is the face of God turned grey and his angels all grown white?

What is the terrible ruby star that burns down the crimson night?

What is the beauty that flames so bright athwar t the awful dawn?

She has taken flesh, she is come to judge the thrones ye rule upon.

Quail ye kings for an end is come in the bir th of BABALON.

Afterwards, Parsons expressed his confidence in the w orking, but wrote, “Now I can do no mor e than pray and w ait.” On the sixth of March, Parsons recorded in a letter to Cr owley:

I hardly know how to tell.

I am under the command of extreme secrecy.

I have had the most impor tant and devastating experience of my life between February 2nd and March 4th.

I believe it was the r esult of the 9th [degr ee] working with the girl [Cameron] who answered my elemental summons. (She is now in New York.)

I have been in dir ect touch with One, who is most Holy and Beautiful, mentioned in *The Book of the Law*.

I cannot write the name at present.

First instructions were received direct, further through Ron acting as seer.

I have followed them to the letter.

There was a desire for incarnation.

I was the agency chosen to assist the bir th, which is now accomplished.

I do not yet know the vehicle, but it will come to me, bringing a secret sign I know.

Forgetfulness was the price.

I am to act as instructor, guardian, guide, for nine months.

Then it will be loosed in the world.

That is all I can say, now.

There must be extreme secrecy.

I cannot tell you the depth of r eality, the poignancy, terror and beauty I have known. Now I am back in the world, weak with r eaction.

But the knowledge remains. I have found my will. It is to ser ve, and serve I shall. All I am or will be is pledged.

I must put the Lodge in Roy's [Lef fingwell] hands, pr epare a suitable place, and car ry on my business to pr ovide the suitable material basis . . .

It is not a question of keeping anything fr om you, it is a question of not dwelling or even thinking unduly on the matter until the time is right. Pr emature discussion or r evelation would cause an abortion.

A manuscript is prepared, which will be r eleased to the proper persons at the right time . . .

All the tests are right, all the signs are right. There is no danger, save in weakness or pride.

Although he claimed there was no danger, in his metaphysical life, the fearless Parsons thus showed the same methodology he used in his rocket propulsion work, a tenaciousness in testing and a thrillseeker's lack of caution concerning what he ma y "conjure." Secretly Parsons did write the name of the "One , who is most Holy and Beautiful": he called her *Babalon*. He further directed Crowley to contact no one sa ve himself or Hubbar d r egarding this matter . Unfortunately, he does not seem to have tested this spirit with the rigorousness of his r ocket-testing or thor oughness that Cr owley used when he w as contacted b y entities such as Abuldiz, Amalantr ah, Aiwass, and Lam. Cr owley always required proofs during such contacts, proofs established b y the *gematria* of certain k ey words, i.e ., the entity's name, location, or some other word or phrase. If Parsons subjected "Babalon" to such a test, no r ecord survives.

Again Parsons wrote, "For the last three days I have performed an operation of birth, using the air tablet, the cup, and a female figur e [Cameron?], properly invoked by the wand [penis], then sealed up in the altar. Last night I performed an oper ation of symbolic birth and delivery." This operation is not part of the instructions contained in *Liber Astarte*, which *Liber 49* told him to enact, but it seems to have satisfied Parsons.

On Mar ch 15, Cr owley sent P arsons an admonishment about Cameron: “I am particularly interested in what y ou have written me about the elemental [Camer on], because for some little time past I have been endea vouring to interv ene per sonally on y our behalf. I would however have you recall [Eliphas] Levi’s advice that ‘the love of the Magus for such things [elementals] is insensate and ma y destroy him.’” “Eliphas Lévi” was the pseudonym of Alphonse-Louise Constant, a “magic theor etician” who wrote two books, *Dogma and Ritual of High Magic* and *History of Magic* , published in 1854 and 1856, respectively. Although he died in 1875 in relative obscurity, his works gained popularity with F rench intellectuals such as Victor Hugo. Lévi’ s popularity stems fr om his ability to be r omantic yet rational at the same time. Crowley was so impressed that he considered himself the reincarnation of Lévi. Crowley’s claim to have intervened personally on Parsons’ behalf is interesting, as it certainly took place by use of the OTO’s “key,” i.e., magically.

Crowley cautioned Parsons yet again about his own worst traits, in the letter of March 15, 1946:

It seems to me that there is a danger of your sensitiveness upsetting your balance. Any experience that comes your way you have a tendency to over-estimate. The first fine careless rapture wears off in month or so, and some other experience comes along and carries you off on its back. Meanwhile you have neglected and bewildered those who are dependent on you, either from above or from below.

I will ask you to bear in mind that you have one fulcr um for all your levers, and that is your original oath to devote yourself to raising mankind. All experiences, all ef forts, must be referred to this; as long as it remains unshaken you cannot go far wrong, for by its own stability it will bring you back fr om any tendency to excess.

At the same time, you being as sensitive as you ar e, it behoves [sic] you to be more on your guard than would be the case with the majority of people.

As it had so many times before, the warning fell on deaf ears.

The same da y, Parsons wrote Cr owley a letter, in which he formally turned the operation of Agape Lodge over to R oy Leffingwell, so he could focus on his pr oject. Parsons wrote that the “ IX ths”—meaning Leffingw

ell, Jane W olfe, and himself—w ould hold council monthly to discuss lodge policy. Whatever had happened to Parsons in the desert must ha ve been quite amazing for him to r eact so. He finally had dir ection, something he had lost when he sold out of Aerojet—something he ne ver really had spiritually , except perhaps when he first encountered Crowley and the OTO. A letter dated one day later was sent to all Agape Lodge members, declaring Leffingwell "executive head" of the lodge.

Crowley was now a dying man with a heroin problem brought on by his ph ysician's treatment of his r espiratory problems. As further letters arriv ed fr om the States , he became incr easingly unhapp y about Parsons' claims, no doubt concerned about the futur e of his life's work.

On April 19, Crowley wrote Parsons, "You have got me completely puzzled by your remarks about the elemental—the danger of discussing or cop ying anything. I thought I had a most morbid imagination, as good as any man's, but it seems I have not. I cannot form the slightest idea what y ou can possibly mean."

And to K arl Germer, Crowley wrote, "Apparently he, or Hubbar d, or somebody, is pr oducing a Moonchild. I get fairly fr antic when I contemplate the idiocy of these goats."[42]

The purpose of Parsons' Babalon Working seems to ha ve been the birth of a child—the Moonchild—into whom Babalon would incarnate. It had said in *The Book of the Law* four decades earlier that this child would be "mightier than all the kings of the Earth" (AL III:45). Aleister Crowley had once thought F rater A chad was this magical child, the birth of which occurs on the astral plane rather than the physical and represents a possession of sorts . Jane W olfe wrote that Jack P arsons might be this child, but Parsons himself thought differently.

The fact that Cameron later claimed to have been impregnated by Parsons during their first two weeks together casts doubt upon the literal application of the term Moonchild. She said she had an (illegal) abortion with Parsons' consent (and another abortion later on), then just a few days later they were performing another working. If a literal child were what he was seeking (remember, she didn't know the purpose of the w orking), the purported pr egnancy probably would have gone another w ay. This abortion story actually

serv es as good evidence that Parsons was looking for an adult female to arriv e, perhaps in a manner similar to Camer on's arrival.

In any case, the "magical child" is an ages-old concept found in the m ythologies of certain cultur es. The magical child concept Parsons was pursuing was given definition by Crowley, of course. In *De Arte Magica* Aleister Crowley wrote, "It is said by certain initiates that to obtain Spiritual gifts, and to aid Nature, the Sacrament should be as it were a Nuptial of the Folk of the Earth; but that Magick is of the Daemon, and that b y a certain perv ersion of the Office , may be created Elementals fit to perform the will of the Magician." The "perversion," no doubt, refers to unorthodox acts of sex by which may be created elementals or "magical" children.

Also called a "homunculus" ("little man"), the Moonchild' s cr eation is described in Cr owley's novel by the same name, *Moonchild* (originally titled *The Butterfly Net*):

But other magicians sought to make this Homunculus in a way closer to nature. In all these cases they had held that environment could be modified at will by the application of telesmata or sympathetic figures. For example, a nine-pointed star would attract the influence which they called Luna—not meaning the actual moon, but an idea similar to the poets' idea of her . By sur rounding an object with such stars, with similarly-disposed herbs, per fumes, metals, talismans, and so on, and by carefully keeping off all other influences by parallel methods, they hoped to invest the original object so treated with the Lunar qualities, and no others. (I am giving the briefest outline of an immense subject.) Now then they proceeded to tr y to make the Homunculus on ver y curious lines.

Man, said they, is merely a fertilized ovum properly incubated. Heredity is there even at first, of course, but in a feeble degr ee. Anyhow, they could ar range any desir ed envir onment fr om the beginning, if they could only manage to nourish the embr yo in some artificial way—incubate it, in fact, as is done with chickens to-day. Furthermore, and this is the crucial point, they thought that by per forming this experiment in a specially pr epared place, a place protected magically against all incompatible for ces, and by invoking into that place some one for ce which they desired, some tremendously power ful being, angel or ar changel—and they had conjurations which they thought

capable of doing this—that they would be able to cause the incar nation of beings of infinite knowledge and power, who would be able to bring the whole world into Light and Truth.

I may conclude this little sketch by saying that the idea has been almost universal in one form or another; the wish has always been for a Messiah or Super man, and the method some attempt to produce man by artificial or at least abnormal means.

Crowley speaks of a (female) magical child who would be the product of her envir onment rather than her her edity, a de velopment that distinguishes magical childr en fr om the r egular type. One r elatively recent attempt at producing a messianic child occurred with the occult society of Theosophy, whose leaders at the time tried to raise the young Indian boy, Jiddhu Krishnamurti, as their o wn World Savior. The plan failed, as Krishnamurti e ventually abandoned the Theosophists and started his own movement, for which he became w orld-renowned. In Parsons' case, however, he (and Crowley) seem to have been using the phrases "magical child" and "Moonchild" interchangeably—and not as literally as Crowley's description would suggest.

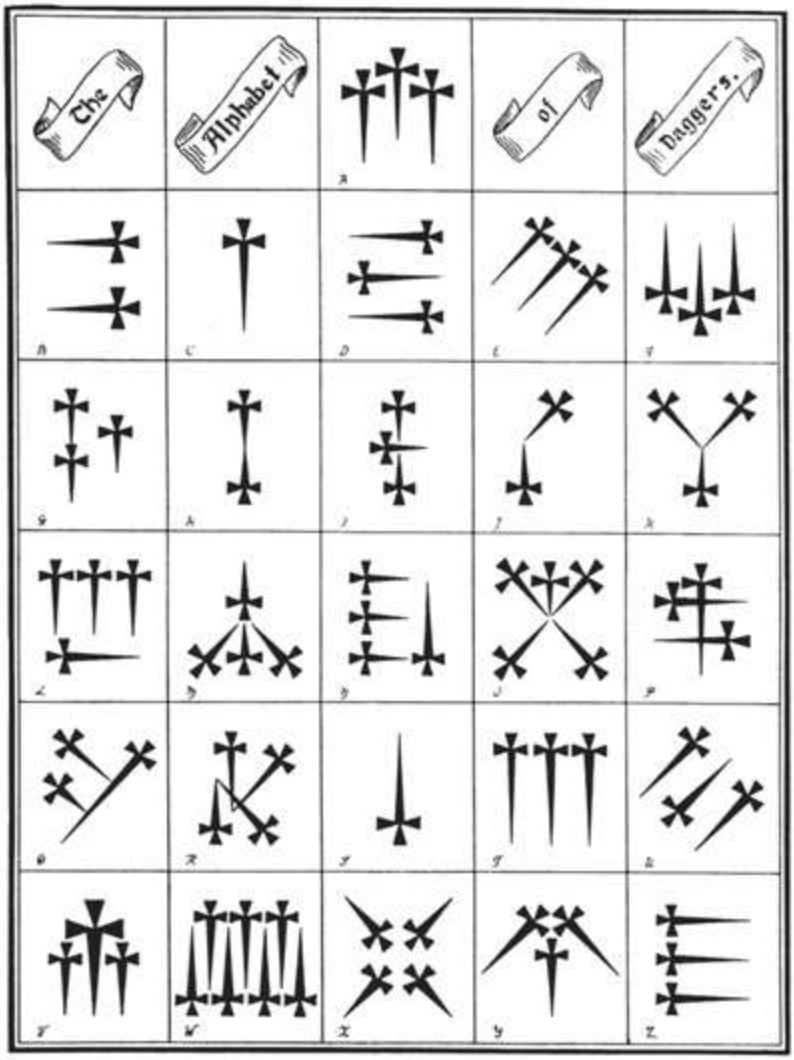
Although like Jones before him Parsons himself was viewed as the magical child, he e vidently felt otherwise , such that he w as determined himself to pr oduce it—or, rather, *her*—as Parsons wrote of a *female* messiah. Indeed, the purpose of P arsons' operation has been -underemphasized, as the Babalon W orking itself w as a pr eparation for what w as to come: a *thelemic* messiah. This messiah w ould mature in a magically influenced envir onment. She w ould then assume a leadership role. In addition, the word "child" was symbolic, intended not for an infant but for one w oman in particular (or perhaps even all women in general).

It seems clear that P arsons was seeking not an idea but a living being, who evidently was not Cameron. "There was a desire to incarnate," he wrote. He considered Cameron his elemental, though he did occasionally (and par adoxically) refer to her Babalon—as she later did herself. But the Babalon W orking was clearly aimed at bringing Babalon down to earth from somewhere else. This plan backfired.

It was not nine months but nine y ears later that Camer on would claim to

be Babalon herself and to have given birth to a magical child on the astr al plane. In the meantime , Parsons started to look elsewhere for this “ child”—to a physical incarnation embodied in some unknown person. He wr ote, “The inv ocation of Babalon serv ed to exteriorize the Oedipus comple x; at the same time , because of the forces involved it pr oduced extraordinary magical effects . However, this operation is accomplished and closed—you [referring to himself] should have nothing mor e to do with it—nor e ven think of it, until Her manifestation is r evealed, and pr oved beyond the shado w of a doubt.”

With the Babalon Working, it may also be that Parsons was trying to compete against Smith for Crowley’s attention, even though Smith had been forced into exile. Indeed, the Babalon Working has parallels with Crowley’s *Liber 132*, in which he exalted Smith in order to send him on a “retreat.”


The
Alphabet
of
Daggers.

nine

Parsons' Final Years: 1946-1952

On February 20, 1946, in between the two parts of the Babalon W orking, Parsons, Hubbar d and Betty formed a compan y called " Allied Enterprises ." T o Hubbar d's $1,183.91, Parsons put up $2 0,970.80, which w as his "laundr omat money," while y oung Betty contributed nothing. In this enterprise , they w ere to buy boats on the East Coast and sail them back to California for r esale (or to w them b y trailer, if cheaper). The y also stated an inter est in inv estments of a "v aried and eclectic natur e," from which it may be inferred that they went beyond boats—perhaps into explosives. Some of the mone y, Parsons said, as did R ypinski, was used to buy the house at 1 003 S. Or ange Grove Ave. as w ell, which Parsons leased first.

In April 1946, after the second part of the Babalon W orking, Ron left with Betty and $1 0,000 of the compan y's mone y. Later that month Parsons started to think that they had cheated him. He threatened to chase them, but a call to Hubbar d soon calmed him do wn. Astrologer and initiate Louis Culling o verheard the call and couldn't believe the formerly angry P arsons could be so easily sw ayed. Parsons ended the call with, "I hope w e shall alw ays be partner s, Ron," a comment that made Culling cringe.

Culling wrote to K arl Germer on Ma y 12, "As you may know by this time, Brother Jack signed a partnership agreement with this Ron and Betty wher eby all mone y earned b y the three for life is equally divided between the three. As far as I can ascertain, Brother Jack has put in all of his money . . . meanwhile, Ron and Betty have bought a boat for themselves in Miami for about $10,000 and are living the life of Riley, while Brother Jack is living at rock bottom, and I mean rock bottom. It appear s that originally the y ne ver secr etly intended to bring this boat ar ound to the California coast to sell at a pr ofit, as they told Jack, but rather to have a good time on it on the east coast." Indeed, Hubbard had written the Chief of Na val Personnel before he headed east, asking permission to sail to South America and China.

On May 22 Crowley wired to Germer, “Suspect Ron playing confidence trick—John P arsons w eak fool—obvious victim—pr owling

Thanks for yours of May 23r d enclosing one from Frater Achad [Charles Stansfeld Jones]. It is ver y good that he should come crawling back to the penitent’s form after thirty years, but I do not quite see how it is going to make up for the time he has wasted on his insane vanity, and you might let him know this view.

I am glad that his submission should have taken place at this moment, however, because his case ser ves as ver y useful to quote in discussing the business of Jack Parsons . . .

The question of Frater 210 [Parsons] seems to me very typical. He reminds me up to a point—though he is on a much lower plane than they—of two men who joined the Or der shortly after I took it over [Jones and Victor Neubur g]: both cases seem to me to have certain significance if applied to the present position of Frater 210.

It seems to me on the infor mation of our Brethren in California (if we may assume them to be accurate) Frater 210 has committed both these errors [i.e., those of Jones and Neubur g].

Both cases were alike in this—that after a ver y short period of training both had more than fulfilled their early promise; they could claim not only attainment, but achievement—and that in no small degree. I am sorry that there is no possibility of making any similar claim on behalf of Frater 210 . . .

He has got a miraculous illumination which rimes [sic] with nothing, and he has appar ently lost all his personal independence. From our brother’s [Louis Culling] account he has given away both his girl and his money—appar ently it is the or dinary confidence trick.

Of course, I must suspend judgement until I have heard his side of the story, but he promised me quite a long while ago to write me a full explanation, and to date I have r eceived nothing from him . . .

By June, a sadder but wiser P arsons could w ait no longer and went to Florida after Hubbar d and Betty , discovering they had purchased three boats. He found two of the boats, but not Ron and Betty. One, the *Harpoon*, w as anchor ed at Ho ward Bond’ s Yacht Harbor. Another, *Blue Water II*,

was at the American Ship Building Company. Parsons then r ented a r oom and w aited. Two days later, someone from Bond's called Parsons to say that the *Harpoon* had just sailed. He was too late to catch them, so he r eturned to his room and consecrated a circle. Parsons wrote Crowley on July 5:

Here I am in Miami, pursuing the childr en of my folly . . . Hubbar d attempted to escape me by sailing at 5 PM, and I per formed a full invocation to Bar tzabel [a form of Mars] within the Cir cle at 8 PM. At the same time, so far as I can check, his ship was str uck by a sudden squall off the coast, which ripped of f his sails and forced him back to port, where I took the boat in custody . . . I have them well tied up. They can not move without going to jail. However I am afraid that most of the money has alr eady been dissipated. I will be lucky to salvage three to five thousand dollars. In the interim I have been flat broke.

Bartzabel had a little help from the U.S. Coast Guard, who rescued and detained the pair. Betty later described her and Hubbar d's situation during the storm as "desperate," relating that the two were very scared that they would not make it back to shore.

On July 1, 1946, Parsons sued Allied Enterprises in Dade County, Florida Cir cuit Court, case number 1 01634. In an instance of remarkably swift justice , the court appr oved a settlement on July 10, and on July 1 1 the three partners signed an agreement dissolving the compan y. Parsons recovered tw o boats: *Blue W ater II* (a schooner) and *Diane* (a yacht). Hubbard was allowed to retain possession of the *Harpoon*, a tw o-masted schooner, and use it as collateral against a promissory note in the amount of $2900. Hubbar d was also or dered to pa y Parsons' legal fees . Parsons returned to Pasadena and ne ver hear d from either party again. Hubbar d and Betty eventually married and had a daughter Hubbard's career with Scientology is well-documented, in various versions, elsewhere.

The incident affected not just Parsons, as his bad luck now forced him to stop sending money to his ex-wife, Helen, and Wilfred Smith, who had married. The fact that he w as sending mone y to them in the first place reveals how much he thought of Smith, as well as his generosity. P arsons' r egular contributions to Cr owley, ho wever, would continue until the latter' s death the next year. At the time of the financial disaster, Smith wrote to

Crowley:

It all seems to be folding up together. [Jack] can't send any more money. Grimaud's [Helen] is r unning out. These, and the fier ce stab of Regina's [Kahl] death occurred all within a day or two. But above all I feel I have shot my bolt, such as it was, and missed the mark.

From the utterly desolate state in which I star ted out, which held for months, I am glad to say ver y recently the joy in some of the masterpieces has returned to me. I expected never to write to you again; hardly know why I do. But there is a feeling one owes a gentleman a letter when one fails to tur n up at a dinner engagement. Besides, I don't think I could get Grimaud to write you this; she refuses steadily to accept my negative view of this Grand Magical Retirement. You must be so inur ed to disciples' failur es that just one more won't surprise you.

On August 20, Parsons sent a formal letter of resignation from the OTO to Cr owley. Instead of the usual "Thrice Illuminated, Thrice Illustrious, and V ery Dear Br other" salutation, he began it "Dear Aleister." He gave no explanation but merely said the resignation was his will, although it certainly may have been a reflection of his disillusionment in the face of such misfortunes. He expressed his continued sympathy to the Cr owley's "Rights of Man" *(Liber OZ)*, quoted below, but finished b y saying, "I do not belie ve that the OTO, as an autocratic organization, constitutes a true and proper medium for the expression and attainment of these principles [the Rights of Man]." Many resigning members have made similar remarks.

Regarding P arsons' sour ce of e xtra income , Louis Culling remarked that Parsons was "bootlegging nitroglycerine," presumably meaning he w as selling it illegally . But to whom? Camer on apparently was bold enough to help him in this enterprise , whatever it was. She and P arsons w ere married in San Juan Capistr ano on October 19, 1946 by a Justice of the P eace named Mar co F. Forster, with Ed Forman and his wife Jeanne witnessing the event. Recorded in the Orange County Recorder's Office, the marriage took place just before P arsons' JPL partner F rank Malina w as invited b y Julian Huxley to go to F rance and work for UNESCO. Rypinski opined that Malina left the country to distance himself fr om the scandal r evolving around Parsons, as there apparently was an investigation into the house and possibly

some ne wspaper exposure. But Malina himself says he was just looking for something differ ent to do, which rings closer to the truth.

In late 1946, Parsons and Cameron left 1003 S. Orange Grove Ave., and the lodge, which met at several different places after this. The big house was later torn down to make way for apartments. Parsons also left his job with the V ulcan Powder Company, having been offer ed employment with the North American A viation Corpor ation in nearby Ingle wood, California, wher e he w orked until 1948, when Hughes Aircraft in Culver City hired him.

In addition, Parsons engaged in consulting work. As such, he was often called on by the Los Angeles District A ttorney's Office, the Los Angeles P olice Department, the Los Angeles Superior Court, Northrup Air craft Compan y, Gener al Chemical Compan y, the National Defense R esearch Council, and the Office of Scientific Research and De velopment. Parsons was also a member of se veral technical societies , including the American Chemical Society , the Institute of A eronautical Sciences , the American Institute for the Advancement of Science , the Society of Sigma Xi, and the Arm y Ordnance Association. His obituary said he had refused several honorary degrees, but there is no further evidence to support this claim. A membership in Sigma Xi seems unlikely due to his lack of a degree but is reported by two different sources, such that it is possible his reputation was enough to gain him entr ance.

Disillusioned b y the incident with Hubbar d and Betty , P arsons drifted a way fr om magick and focused his will on his technical career, although the two aspects of his life could never be completely separated. Unfortunately, his misfortune continued, and he had little success, nothing to equal the glory of his W orld War II efforts . On May 17, 1948, his tw o worlds collided, as he lost his go vernment security clearance "because of his membership in a religious cult . . . believed to adv ocate sexual perv ersion . . . or ganized at subject' s home . . . which had been r eported subv ersive." Elsewhere the FBI describes it as a "mythic love cult," despite Parsons' insistence it was "dedicated to the fr eedom and liberty of the individual." The same old plagues were still haunting him.

In a letter to Karl Germer dated June 19, 1949, Parsons said he lost the clearance for membership in the OTO and for publicly circulating *Liber OZ*,

a statement of “the rights of man.” Kno wn also as *Liber LXXVII*, certain elements of the statement are understandably disturbing to different factions of society and, although P arsons may have viewed himself a teacher destined to affect the po wers that be , the latter, accor ding him, e vidently per ceived him and his ideas as a security risk. *Liber OZ* reads in full as follows:

> The law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world.
>
> *—AL II:2*

> Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law .
>
> *—AL I:40*

> Thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay
>
> *—AL I:42-3*

Every man and every woman is a star.—AL I:3

There is no god but man.

1. Man has the right to live by his own law—

   to live in the way that he wills to do:
   to work as he will:
   to play as he will:
   to rest as he will:
   to die when and how he will.

2. Man has the right to eat what he will:

   to drink what he will:
   to dwell where he will:
   to move as he will upon the face of the ear th.

3. Man has the right to think what he will:

   to speak what he will:
   to write what he will:
   to draw, paint, carve, etch, mould, build as he will:
   to dress as he will.

4. Man has the right to love as he will:—

Take your fill and will of love as ye will,
when, where, and with whom ye will.—AL I:51

5. Man has the right to kill those who would thwar t these rights.

The slaves shall ser ve.—AL II:58

Love is the law, love under will.—AL I:57

According to Parsons' FBI file, however, the investigation was actually caused by his association with kno wn Communists , a pr oblem shared by his JPL/GALCIT comrades Frank Malina, Hsue-shen T sien and Martin Summerfield. As early as 1938, the self-described anti-war, anti-capitalist P arsons had subscribed to the *Daily P eople's World*, a Communist paper, and had attended a fe w meetings of different groups during the subsequent y ears, joining the "subv ersive" American Civil Liberties Union in 1946. One of the early victims of what would become the McCarthy witchhunts, Parsons later testified in closed court that his inter est was merely an intellectual one . He told them that *thelema*, the "will" aspect of Crowley's work, was definitely anti-communist and anti-fascist, which it is, and his clearance was finally reinstated on March 7, 1949. Nonetheless , Cameron left him soon after.

Humorously, Parsons' FBI file is full of r eferences to the "Chur ch of *Thelma*." Ther e is also an unclear r eference to P arsons doing something on September 2 1, 1948 to bring the attention of go vernment officials upon him once mor e, but apparently nothing came of it. Parsons then spent tw o years on the staff of the Univ ersity of Southern California's Pharmacology Department starting in 1948.

Despite his occupational troubles based in part on his occult activities —or possibly because of them—Parsons was unable to avoid the exotic lure. On Halloween of 1948, Babalon called on Parsons in some unspecified manner and ur ged him to r esume his magick. Lik e so many who suffer the ills of the ph ysical world, Parsons would turn once more to religion in his time of need, beginning a 17-day "working of the w and" (17 is a masculine number because of its association with Mars), the climax of which was Babalon's manifestation in a dream. He had Smith christen him "Belarion Armiluss Al Dajjal, AntiChrist" as he took the Oath of the Abyss. Oddly enough, considering the friction between them, Parsons remained close to Smith, the

man who had married P arsons' wife and who w as also his superior in the A∴A∴. Their relationship was probably more formal than personal by this time.

At the conclusion of his 17-da y w orking, Babalon instructed Parsons on an " astral w orking," i.e ., an out-of-body e xperience. Parsons had, by his own accounts, a "well-developed body of light," so apparently this travel was an easy task for him. Indeed, he claimed success with a vision wherein he "went into the sunset with Her sign and into the night past accur sed and desolate places and c yclopean ruins, and so came at last to the City of Chor azin. And there a great tower of Black Basalt was raised, that was part of a castle whose further battlements ruled over the gulf of star s."

Chorazin was a small town on the Sea of Galilee that, according to the gospel story , Jesus cur sed when the citizens w ould not r epent (Mt. 1 1:21; Lk. 1 0:13). Later legends claimed that the Antichrist would be born in Chor azin, whose modern name is K erazeh. The black basalt ruins of the city's old synagogue to which Parsons refers are still standing.

Regarding the title with which P arsons had himself christened b y Smith, *Belarion* is an alternate spelling (presumably from the Greek) of "Belial," a demon named in the Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Jewish apocrypha (hidden texts of dubious authenticity) whose name means "Without God," as "Bel" or "Ba'al" means "God" or "Lor d." Belarion is often identified b y Christian writer s with the Beast in Revelation, with whom Aleister Cr owley in turn identified himself. Rather than emulating his mentor , ho wever, P arsons ma y ha ve acquired the moniker from a fantasy novel which featured a character by that name.

The term *Armiluss* is the Jewish equivalent of the Antichrist. As the end appr oaches, Je wish eschatology states , the Messiah ben Ephraim ("born of Ephr aim" or Isr ael, the northern kingdom) will come first, following by Armiluss who will lead the armies of Gog and Magog against the armies of the Messiah at the battle of Armageddon, murdering him. Ben Ephr aim's corpse will be left for the scavengers, but the Messiah ben Da vid (whom the Christians believe was Jesus) will appear and resurrect him.

The next word in Parsons' title, *Al-Dajjal*, is the Islamic version of the Antichrist, whose name is Arabic for "the deceiver." He does not appear in

the K oran but rather in the *hadith*, which are the sayings of Mohammed as recorded by his disciples. Al-Dajjal is blind in one eye but is able to perform mir acles, the gr eatest of which will be bringing order to a w orld in chaos . On Judgment Da y he will be defeated by the Mahdi, whom most Muslims belie ve is the return of Mohammed.

The beastly-named P arsons then took the Oath of the Ab yss. “Crossing the Ab yss” inv olves the total denial of the w orld and detachment from the ego. The oath has survived along with some of Parsons’ other papers from this period and begins as follo ws:

I, who am called John Whiteside Parsons in the outer and Fra. 210 in the inner, do hereby in the presence of Fra. 132 [Wilfred Smith], take this oath of a Magister T empli [Master of the Temple], which for me is the Oath of Antichrist. And I swear that my name is BELARION ARMILUSS AL DAJJAL, ANTICHRIST who am come to fulfil the law of the Beast 666 [Crowley].

And I hereby accept all things needful for the fulfillment of my will, and do swear to persevere in this my chosen work unto the end.

Parsons’ personalization was followed by the Oath of the Abyss or “Great Obligation” that Aleister Crowley took and that is contained in his 1908 diary “John St. John” in *The Equinox* vol. I, number 2 special supplement:

Then did I take upon myself the Great Obligation as follows:

I. I, O.M. & c., a member of the Body of God, hereby bind myself on behalf of the whole Universe, even as we are now physically bound unto the cross of suffering:
II. that I will lead a pure life, as a devoted ser vant of the Order:
III. that I will understand all things:
IV. that I will love all things:
V. that I will perform all things and endure all things:
VI. that I will continue in the Knowledge and Conversation of My Holy Guardian Angel:
VII. that I will work without attachment:
VIII. that I will work in truth:
IX. that I will rely only upon myself:
X. that I will interpret every phenomenon as a par ticular dealing of God

with my soul.

As a part of this v enture, Parsons prepared two important papers: *Analysis By A Master of the T emple*, which is autobiogr aphical in nature, and *The Book of AntiChrist*. *Analysis* seems to have been prepared prior to P arsons' attempt to cr oss the Ab yss, as "F rater Belarion" speaks to Parsons in the third person, saying "I await you in the City of the Pyr amids."

Subsequently writing *as* Belarion, Parsons refers to the OTO as "an excellent training school for adepts, but hardly an appropriate Order for the manifestation of Thelema," a statement tantamount to heresy. Obviously, he was frustrated by attempts to discipline him, and his notion of Thelema w as almost fundamentalist, based on little mor e than *Liber OZ*. Trying to make lemonade out of lemons, he writes in the thir d per son, "The e xperience with the OTO and A erojet w ere needed to dispel y our romanticism, self deception, and r eliance on others. Betty was one link in the pr ocess designed to tear y ou away from the no w unneeded Oedipus comple x, the o vervaluation of women and romantic love."

Evidently on account of such failur es, Parsons listed seven things to begin working on immediately:

Works of the Wand—of the Will alone avail in this state. No other weapons should be used, no other ritual save the hymn to the Unnamed One in the Anthem of the [Gnostic] Mass.

You should be meticulous in all obser vations pertaining to the Will, even the most petty . Fulfill all obligations and pr omises, undertake nothing which you cannot fulfill, be pr ompt in the discharge of each responsibility.

Be neat in personal and domestic habits; indicate your self respect to yourself.

Do not become unduly involved with any person, and practice all your hard-earned wisdom in your relations with women.

Set up your personal af fairs in business or der. Keep your accounts current and your papers neatly filed.

Finish your poetr y for publication. Finish the synthesis of the Tarot and star t work on the pr eparation of the lessons of class instruction from your book.

Pay no attention to any phenomena whatsoever, and continue in a sober and responsible way of life under all circumstances.

Originally in Crowley's play *The Ship*, which he wrote shortly after learning the K ey of the OTO, "The Hymn to the Unnamed One" is recited during the Gnostic Mass , wher e it is r eferred to as the "Anthem." Written to portr ay the essence of that K ey in dr amatic form, the hymn invokes the " centre and secret of the Sun/And that most holy mystery/Of which vehicle am I." [43]

After taking the oath, which he and Smith both signed, P arsons endured an unspecified 40-da y or deal—longer than the entir e Babalon Working—that probably involved a retreat of some sort and fasting. He emer ged to claim the gr ade of a Master of the T emple. Parsons was 33 when he took the Oath of the Abyss; Crowley was 34 when he attempted the same. Little survives of Parsons' account; all we have is his statement in *The Book of AntiChrist* . Parsons should have kept detailed records of his attempt at crossing the Abyss, but if such records existed they must ha ve been lost or destr oyed. It is doubtful he succeeded in his attempt.

In or der to try to r econstruct what P arsons might ha ve done to cross the Abyss, we need to review what Crowley himself did in this regard. It ma y not be the same pr ocedure as that attempted b y Parsons, but it was in print at that time as *The Vision and the Voice*, and Parsons did in fact idolize Cr owley, such that he pr obably stuck to the original, at least to some degr ee. It is important to note that crossing the Abyss is a part of the A∴A∴'s doctrine, and has nothing to do with the OTO. In fact, b y this time P arsons had resigned from the latter.

Crowley carried out his Ab yss-crossing process during 1908 and 1909. A key part of this working was a 30-day walk across the Algerian desert, upon which he took along *Frater Omnia Vincam*, known in the "world of men" as Victor Neubur g, the acolyte who w as in love with him and received Crowley's abuse. Although this endea vor was a full three years before Crowley would learn the sexual secret of the OTO, on one occasion he used Neubur g in an act of se x magic, taking the submissive role to Neuburg's dominance. Neuburg took notes as Cr owley described what he saw.

The cr ossing of the Ab yss is part of the old Enochian s ystem, which

posits a universe of 3 0 concentric Air es (or Aethyrs) with the earth at the center, much as the ancients did with the se ven planetary spheres, although there are other arrangements. The 30th Aire is the lowest; hence, it is the closest to the earth. The Fir st Aire is thus the highest, but ther e ar e said to be unkno wn, unnumber ed Air es above it.

Each Aire, as seen in the discussion of the Babalon W orking, has its angels, kings, Seniors, cherubs, etc. associated with it. W orking with each Air e r equires inv oking these entities , just as P arsons invoked EXARP in January 1946. The full ritual is full of consecrations, hexagrams and pentagrams, and takes at least an hour to perform for each Aire. The ritual must be recited from memory, and "vibrated" in the original Enochian language.

The Air es ar e tr ansversed in r everse or der, as the highest numbered Aire is closest to the earth. Crowley worked with the 30th Aire first, then the 29th, and so on. On the 2 1st day, the day of his w orking with the 1 0th Air e, Cr owley had his Ab yss-crossing experience. The 10th Aire is guarded by the demon Choronzon, who dwells in the Abyss.

For Crowley, Aires 30 through 11 involved astral vision ("skrying in the Aethyrs"). The working of the 10th Aire involved a full-blown possession experience in which Cr owley's psyche was overtaken by Choronzon for a time . Neubur gwas e xtremely frightened b y this intense change in his usually amicable master , and w as glad that Crowley was bound inside a consecr ated circle. Unlike the inv ocations of the pr evious nights, there was no physical contact between the two men. The possession lasted until the energy produced by the blood of three sacrificed pigeons ran out, and then it ended.

Crowley emerged with his sanity intact, having survived a face-to-face encounter with the blind forces of the Abyss. He had tasted madness and survived. He had cr ossed the Abyss by giving up his ego. He was now a *Magister Templi* (Master of the Temple) in the A∴A∴.

Crowley scryed the remaining Aires during the course of the next nine days, then finished the rite (and his desert w alk). A detailed account of these endeavors and his ordeal can be found in Crowley's *The Vision and the Voice,* as well as in his *Confessions*.

As noted, it is unclear to what extent Parsons emulated his master in his Abyss working, for which he may very well have retired to the Mojave desert, as Cr owley had to that of Algeria. This period w as a low point in Parsons' life: his former glory lost, he w as employed at a gas station. The w orking lasted 40 da ys, whatever form it took—longer than the entir e Babalon Working, and longer than Cr owley's own Algerian w orking with Neubur g. Unfortunately, most of the records documenting the endea vor ar e no w gone , if the y even existed.

Whatever form it did tak e, this oper ation w as P arsons' Black Pilgrimage, foretold by Babalon three years earlier in *Liber 49*, vs. 33, 58, and 61. After the end of the 40 days, Parsons wrote a two-page document called *The Book of AntiChrist* . In it he predicted the manifestation of Babalon upon the earth within seven years, which he would not have done had he consider ed Camer on to be Babalon. He also pr edicted that an entire nation would embrace *Thelema*. Babalon told him these things w ould come to pass only if he surviv ed the ne xt se ven years. He did not, and it is odd that Babalon, or P arsons' own psyche, or whatever it was, would even suggest that the young man might not, as if it or he knew his sad fate.

In "The Black Pilgrimage," which was the first part of *The Book of AntiChrist*, P arsons compar ed himself to se veral infamous but obscure figures from the past. He referred to them as past lives of his, though probably just as a literary device. The first, Simon Magus, was the legendary fir st-century Samaritan magician who made a living selling miracles to the populace. According to the Bible, after his baptism by Philip (A cts 8:9 ff), Simon continued to peddle his w ares under a Christian guise , giving rise to our w ord "Simon y." Simon preached a gnostic message in which his consort Helen, found in a brothel, w as the fallen Sophia (i.e ., wisdom) whom he had redeemed.

The second past life was Gilles de R etz (usually spelled "R ais" or "Raiz"), a child tortur er and killer also kno wn as Bluebear d the pirate. P arsons mentioned an incident appar ently not documented elsewhere, in which de R ais (ca. 1404-1430) allegedly tried to make Joan of Arc (ca. 1412-1431) the "Queen of the Witchcr aft."

The thir d figur e w as "F rancis Hepburne , Earl Bothw ell," but Parsons

must have been referring to Francis *Stewart*, the fifth Earl of Bothwell. The fourth Earl had been named Hepburn. The fifth Earl was the " Arch-Dianist" of Scotland, meaning the spiritual leader of the Diana-worshipping witches, who sa w in Ste wart the incarnation of the "horned god." He also had a claim to the throne, toward which he dir ected his supernatur al efforts . In fact, Ste wart w as the fir st cousin of King James VI of Scotland, the same murderous King James I of England whose tr anslation of the Bible r emains a standard, and who had John Dee arr ested. As noted, the King fear ed witchcr aft greatly, and he sa w in his cousin the v ery devil whom he kne w the witches w orshiped. When Ste wart busted into the King' s house on July 24, 1593, the King asked whether Stewart came for his life or for his soul. Had James died heirless , Ste wart could ha ve claimed the throne. Some of Stewart's anti-Christian writings are even used in our age. Parsons mentioned him specifically in r egard to a Gille Duncan, about whom there seems to be no information.

The fourth life w as Count Cagliostr o, the famous 18th-century alchemist who studied under St. Germain, the supposedly immortal miracle worker, and Ser aphina (AKA Lorenza Feliciana), Cagliostr o's wife. During the witchhunts , Ser aphina testified against her husband—admittedly under the threat of torture—and he was sentenced to death. His sentence was commuted to life in prison, and Seraphina was allowed to retire to a monastery of nuns .[44]

The common thread in all of these past liv es is the poor r elationship with w omen: P arsons w as still beating himself up for ha ving trusted Betty. In addition to pummeling himself, Parsons also trounced Christianity and "the lying priests, conniving judges, [and] blackmailing police," ending the second part of *The Book of AntiChrist* , called "The Manifesto of the AntiChrist," with the follo wing:

I, BELARION, ANTICHRIST, in the year 1949 of the r ule of the Black Brotherhood called Christianity, do make my Manifesto to all men. And I, THE ANTICHRIST, come among you, saying:

An end to the pretense, and lying hypocrisy of Christianity.

An end to the servile virtues, and superstitious restrictions.

An end to the slave morality.

An end to prudery and shame, to guilt and sin, for these are of the only evil under the Sun, that is fear.

An end to all authority that is not based on courage and manhood, to the authority of lying priests, conniving judges, blackmailing police, and

An end to the servile flattery and cajolery of mobs, the corona-tions of mediocrities, the ascension of dolts.

An end to r estriction and inhibition, for I, THE ANTICHRIST, am come among you pr eaching the Word of the BEAST 666, which is, “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.”

And I, BELARION, ANTICHRIST, do lift up my voice and pr ophesy, and I say: I shall bring all men to the law of the BEAST 666, and in His law I shall conquer the world.

And within seven years of this time, BABALON, THE SCARLET WOMAN HILARION will manifest among ye, and bring this my work to its fruition.

An end to conscription, compulsion, r egimentation, and the tyranny of false laws.

And within nine years a nation shall accept the Law of theB EAST 666 in my name, and that nation will be the first nation of ear th.

And all who accept me the ANTICHRIST and the law of the BEAST 666, shall be accursed and their joy shall be a thousandfold greater than the false joys of the false saints.

And in my name BELARION shall they work miracles, and confound our enemies, and none shall stand before us.

Therefore I, THE ANTICHRIST call upon all the Chosen and elect and upon all men, come for th now in the name of Liber ty, that we may end for ever the tyranny of the Black Br otherhood.

Witness my hand and seal on this [deleted] day of [month deleted], 1949, that is the year of BABALON 4066.

“Hilarion” was the magical motto of the Scarlet W oman Jeanne Foster, an American member of the A∴A∴, whom Crowley called “the Cat.” Foster had completed a w orking with Cr owley in 1915 that he later belie ved pr

oduced a Magical Child in the form of Charles Stansfeld Jones (Frater Achad). The name “Hilarion” comes from one of the “Mahatmas ,” or Ascended Master s, of Theosoph y: Hilarion Smerdis, who was said to have been the angel who dictated the book of R evelation to St. John of P atmos. It is unkno wn wh y P arsons referred to Babalon by this name, which was later one of Camer on’s magical names as well. She may have chosen it because of this document.

On May 8, 1949, some months after the Abyss working—and possibly because of it, in P arsons’ mind—he w as hired by the Hughes Aircraft Company. At that time, he wrote Crowley, “It has now been almost a year since I last wr ote—at that time I was near mental and financial collapse. Since that time I have laboriously gained some sort of mental equilibrium and gradually regained something of a position in my old field in a lar ge aircraft company. My one aim is to r ebuild myself.”

Also in 1949, Cameron returned from Mexico and made Parsons a green box with the Hebr ew letter *shin* painted in red on the lid. He kept his Babalon Working documents in it.

In January of 195 1, Parsons made a striking disco very and wrote Germer:

I have the text of Dee’s skrying in the Seventh Aire, which as he said “. . . so terrified him that, beseeching God to have mercy upon me, I finally answer ed that I will fr om this day for ward meddle no more herein.” The Voice, speaking from Kelley, resulted in a sinister dissociation of Kelley’s personality . The parallel with my own Working with Ron is appalling. After this Kelley r obbed Dee, absconded with his wife, and developed [“continued” would be more appropriate] a criminal confidence car eer . . . In view of the fact that this mss [manuscript] was unknown to Hubbar d and I [sic], the parallelism is r eally extraor dinary. I have another prophecy in *Khaled Khan*,[45] which I shall send later.

This realization of history r epeating itself ma y have hit P arsons too late to do an ything about it, but he w as not defeated. P arsons worked in the Propellants Section at Hughes, and by March 1950 he was listing his title as “Gr oup Leader in Char ge of Pr opellants, Propulsion and Launching Group of the Research and Development Laboratories.” Circumstances had gone well from the date of his hiring May 8, 1949 until June 195 0, at which time

the Isr aelis, with whom he had been negotiating since October 1948 via the American Technion Society, requested a detailed proposal for “the construction of Explosive Plants and the development of rockets and other armaments,” which Parsons would design, build and operate. In order to accomplish this goal, he planned to r elocate to the ne wly formed Israel. According to Parsons’ FBI file he negotiated with no less than the head of the American T echnion Society , a man named Rosenfeldt.

Parsons worked on the proposal in July and August. In September, Hughes had him w orking on a pr oposal for a “R ocket Pr opellant Loading Plant.” The pricing data in this pr oposal was what Parsons needed to finish his pr oposal to the Isr aelis. He took 17 of his o wn documents fr om Hughes , man y of which w ere still designated as “Confidential” or “Restricted,” and passed them on via Cameron to a friend for typing. His FBI file says this (female) friend w as a part of the typing pool at Hughes . This incident occurr ed, in Parsons’ own words, “about the 16th of September,” at the recommendation of von Kármán, who w as also intervie wed b y the FBI with r egard to the Chinese Tsien’s espionage case. Von Kármán’s participation was later found to be incidental in both cases.

These 17 documents were said to be rough drafts of the proposal he was writing for Hughes , but the y were mostly old JATO documents Parsons was using to pad his résumé. His “friend,” whom he said he had kno wn for fiv e y ears, turned him in, and on September 25 the FBI confiscated the documents. On September 26 at noon, they interviewed Parsons. His signed statement denies any wrongdoing, relating his claim that he w as merely using excerpts from those documents, specifically the pricing data, to help complete his proposal to the Israelis, who had not seen any of the documents, or e ven the e xcerpts. In fact, the only per son who had seen them was his “friend” the typist. P arsons said he kne w that she and her husband both had confidential clearances, so he didn’t see wher e an y violation of security had occurr ed. This incident transpired before the more recent and restrictive “Need to Kno w” rules were in effect.

Parsons did admit that removing Hughes Aircraft property without permission was a “serious error of judgement,” but he had a property pass that he sho wed to the guar d when he r emoved the paper s, a common pr actice, Parsons told them. Displa ying his char acteristic trust and generosity

of spirit, in his statement Parsons nobly absolved his “friend” of an y complicity. He further said that he intended to check with the State Department when his pr oposal was complete, before sending it to Israel, where he only planned to work on projects that the U.S. had approved, and that the Technion Society had been set up to regulate such things.

Copies of Parsons’ statement were forwarded to the Air Force, the OSI, and the CIA. The Air Force replied that the incident was an Army matter. Subsequent statements were taken, and many acquaintances of Parsons and Camer on were interviewed. One referred to the couple as “characters and scr ewballs.” Another called Parsons a “crack-pot.” R eferences to earlier inv estigations of his “ cult” at 1 003 S. Orange Grove occupy much of the FBI file. One witness claimed to have gone to the house for a “w eekend party” that turned into a rite wherein everybody removed their str eet clothes, put on cer emonial robes, and were subsequently drugged.

Another witness’ statement bears quoting in its entirety:

[T]he Parsons are an odd and unusual pair in that they do not live by the commonly accepted code of mar ried life, and are both very fascinated by anything unusual or morbid such as voodooism, cults, homosexuality, and r eligious practices that ar e ‘dif ferent.’ Subject seems very much in love with his wife but she is not at all affectionate and does not appear to return his affection. [Two lines deleted.] She is the dominating personality of the two and controls the activities and thinking of subject to a very considerable degree. It is the opinion [deleted] if subject wer e to have been in any way willfully involved in any activities of an intentional espionage nature, it would probably have been on the instigation of his wife.

An FBI memorandum of January 27, 195 1 sho ws Parsons was at that date still under inv estigation for “ espionage,” stating that Parsons intended to turn the documents o ver to an individual who had offered him the promise of a position in Isr ael. It also describes him as a “former emplo yee” of Hughes , meaning that he had been fired b y then. Appar ently he w as fir ed immediately in September , when the breach of security was discovered. In the file is also a routing slip signed by J. Edgar Hoover.

In Mar ch 195 1, P arsons mo ved fr om the house at 424 Arr oyo Terrace in Pasadena to 1200 Esplanade in Redondo Beach, California, the addr ess

giv en b y Jim Br andon but which does not appear in Parsons' FBI file. Other addresses provided for Parsons and Cameron are 34 16 Manhattan A venue and 32 12 Highland A venue, both in Manhattan Beach, California.

On October 25, 1951, the Assistant United States Attorney decided not to prosecute the case, even though on December 15, 195 0 seven additional classified papers were found to be in P arsons' possession during the cour se of the inv estigation. These additional paper s had highly technical titles such as "Ignition Studies of Restricted Burning Solid Propellant Jet Motor s." Curiously, the titles of the original 17 documents Parsons took (13 finished papers and four drafts) are still censored from the FBI file as of this writing. Although it is unverified, it has also been said that Parsons inadvertently employed jargon used by the Manhattan Project, the U.S. nuclear weapons program established in 1942 by Enrico Fermi.

On January 17, 1952, after one year and four months of investigation, the Board informed Parsons this they were pulling his clearance, which was never reinstated. The lack of reinstatement is curious, as officials at Wright-Patterson Field informed the investigators that the entire project had been declassified right after the w ar, even though some of the individual paper s were still classified. Indeed, the y recommended declassification of the paper s in Parsons' possession, as most of them w ere rather old. R egardless, his superior s just didn't trust him an ymore. The combined effects of se veral inv estigations into the magical and se xual activities at the house on South Or ange Grove Avenue, alleged communistic activities, previous loss of clearance, and two separate cases of taking classified documents all added up to mistrust. This tragedy hastened Parsons' decline.

The investigation stressed Parsons, and sometime in late 195 0 he turned to his chosen form of spirituality for r elief, despite its tr oublesome implications . Expr essing his discontent, P arsons wr ote a short text addressed to the Moonchild who was yet to come. The text was to be a part of the *Book of Babalon* and read mournfully:

My daughter, it is now four years since I enter ed the infer nal chapel, and par took of the sacrament of your incar nation. Since then, much that was prophesied at that time has come to pass. I have been stripped of wealth, of honor, and of love; and have participated not once but twice in my own

betrayal, as it was foretold. But how else would I come to the understanding needful to make this your Book?

For thereby I have taken the Oath of the Abyss, and entered my rightful city of Chorazin, and seen ther ein the past lives whereby I came to this, the grossest of all my Workings. Now it would seem that the further matters of the prophecy are at work; events press on tumultuously, and ‘T ime Is’ is write lar ge across the sky [see *Liber 49*, vs. 3].

And against the time when ‘T ime Has Been’ looms up in blood and fire to complete this labor , for your instr uction and for the instruction and help of all men and women who shall sur vive that day.

God knows, ther e is much unsaid and badly said; obscurity , peevishness, haste and bad workmanship mar these pages, until sometimes I wonder if I do not do disser vice to our cause. Ther e is so much needful, so little available. Yet, since I have been chosen, I do my best.

Although I have had indications, they ar e not cer tain. I do not know who you are, nor where you are at this writing; nor have I ever sought to know. This I do know—that you ar e incarnate, that you will manifest at the appointed time, to car ry on the work that is from the beginning: that shall be until we have all entered the City of the Pyramids. The links ar e cer tain—the Beast 666 [Cr owley], the Pole Star 132 [Wilfred Smith], the dark passionate star Regina [Kahl], the bright deceitful star Cassup [Betty Nor thrup], the disastrous star of the White Scribe [Hubbard], and the wandering star, now nameless, in whom you were incarnated.

It is through them that this work is possible. T o them, you are BABALON, and through you to all men it is dedicated.

Parsons didn’t abandon demonic spirituality , or his lo ve for women. He and Cameron reunited after a short separation, moving into the coach house of the F .G. Cruikshank mansion at 1 071 S. Orange Gr ove A ve. Cruikshank still liv ed in the house , while Parsons and Camer on and se veral others rented rooms above the garage at 1 0711/2 S. Orange Grove, just three doors down from the Parsonage. At this location, P arsons spent his nights painstakingly creating an exact duplicate of Dee’ s Enochian tablets, which have not survived.

Prior to the FBI investigation, Parsons had been planning to quit his job at Hughes Air craft and finance a trip to Isr ael to pursue the proposal he had been trying to sell them for se veral years. Parsons and Cameron were now heading to Mexico to test an explosive “more powerful than an ything yet inv ented,” to quote filmmak er R enate Druks, who was an acquaintance of Camer on. Parsons was also still working on what he called “The Gnosis” and “The Witchcr aft,” and reportedly had employment possibilities in Spain.

During this period, in one of his last letters to Karl Germer (Frater Saturnus), Parsons wrote:

No doubt you will be delighted to hear fr om an adept who has undertaken the operation of his H.G.A. [Holy Guar dian Angel] in accord with our traditions.

The operation began auspiciously with a chromatic display of psychosomatic symptoms, and progressed rapidly to acute psychosis. The operator has alter nated satisfactorily between manic hysteria and depr essing melancholy stupor on appr oximately 40 cycles, and satisfactor y progress has been maintained in social ostracism, economic collapses and mental disassociation.

These statements are mentioned not in any vainglorious spirit of conceit, but rather that they may ser ve as comfort and inspiration to other aspirants on the Path.

Now I’m off to the wilds of Mexico for a period, also in pursuit of the elusive H.G.A. before winding up in the guar d finally via the booby hotels, the graveyar d, or—? If the final, you can tell all the little Practicuses [3° = 8in the A∴A∴] that I wouldn’t have missed it for anything.

[Signed] No one. Once called 210.

Although he had intimately e xpressed to Germer some of the strain he w as under, Parsons hated the German man he wr ote, who succeeded Cr owley as head of the OTO, and the letter w as actually intended to sneer at Germer , as Parsons was leaving behind another job at a filling station for much gr eater things.

Expressing the glory of his life , Parsons wrote a poem, one of his last surviving, called “Star ,” which closes the v olume *Songs for the Witch*

Woman:

I remember
When I was a star
In the night
A moving, burning ember
Amid the bright
Clouds of star fire
Going deathward
To the womb.

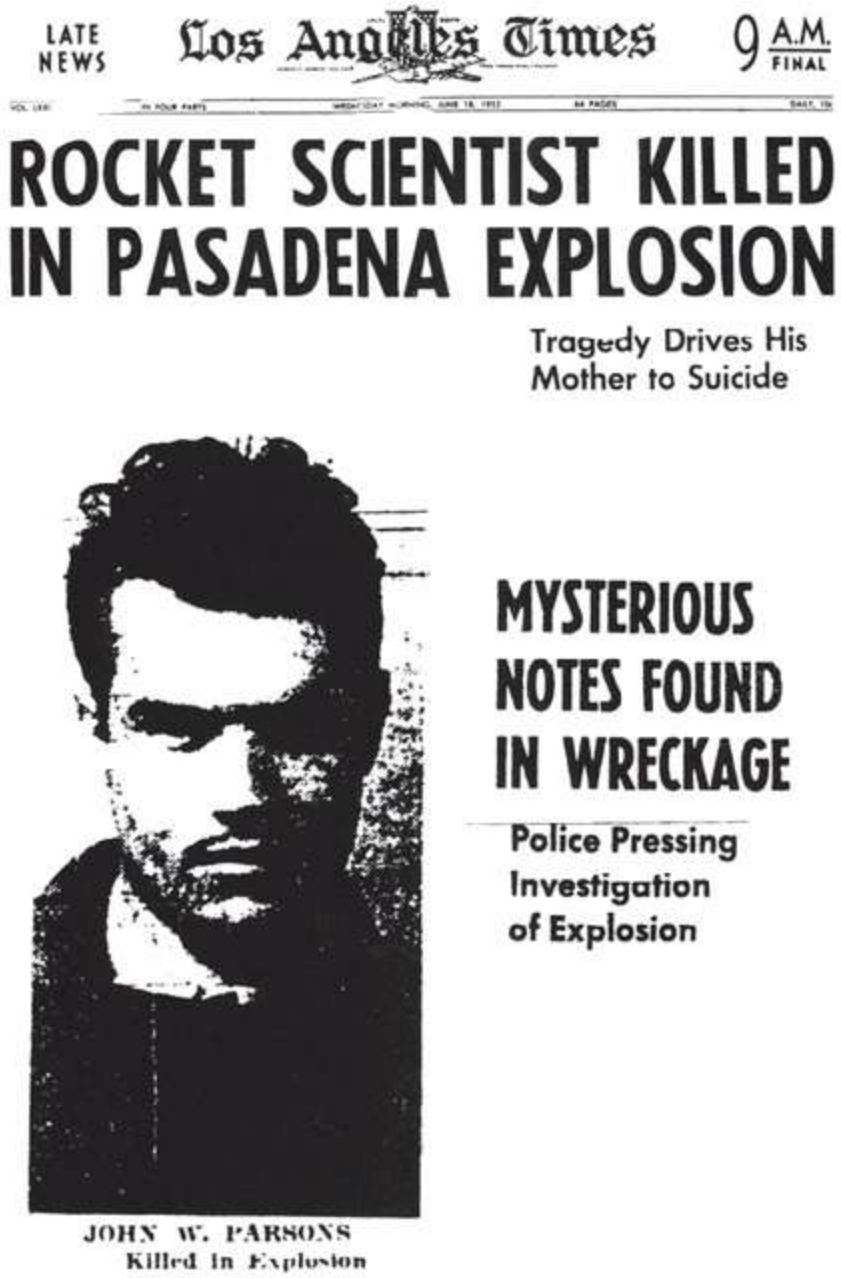
Oh moon
Red moon of my desire
My sisters' and my brothers' fire
Down the great hall of heroes
I the star seed
Wooed the incredible flower.

I alone
My need, my power
attained the dark house
and my bride.

I remember
When I was a god
In my hour
and like a god I died
By the deep waters,
Crucified.

And I dreamed
and the great powers
moved over me
And a voice cried

Go free, star, go free
Seek the dark home
On the wild sky
Good bye, star, good bye.



LATE NEWS — Los Angeles Times — 9 A.M. FINAL

ROCKET SCIENTIST KILLED IN PASADENA EXPLOSION

Tragedy Drives His Mother to Suicide

JOHN W. PARSONS
Killed in Explosion

MYSTERIOUS NOTES FOUND IN WRECKAGE

Police Pressing Investigation of Explosion

ten

Death and Beyond

By 1952, Parsons' various appeals and endea vors seemed to ha ve been w orking, as good fortune appeared to be shining upon him again at last. In fact, he w as working for se veral different concerns, including one with JPL employee Charles Bartley, who had a pyrotechnics license and let Parsons store explosives at his P acoima facility, at which the tw o worked as consultants doing special effects e xplosions for films . Parsons also was working at least part-time for the Bermite P owder Compan y in Saugus, California, where Cameron helped him mix explosives. And he had the job at the service station.

This seeming upturn was short-lived, however, as the ultimate catastrophe la y just ar ound the corner . Six y ears earlier, on Mar ch 2, 1946, Hubbar d had channeled an eerily pr ophetic message , after which, Parsons wrote, the ex-Navy man was "pale and sweaty": "She [Babalon] is the flame of life, power of darkness, she destroys with a glance, she ma y take th y soul. She feeds upon the death of men. Beautiful—horrible . . . She shall absorb thee, and thou shalt become living flame before She incarnates."

In addition, utilizing one of the tw o abilities Camer on claimed Parsons had taught her, i.e., to use her epileptic seizures to enter the astral plane (the other one being the tarot), Cameron claimed to have discovered a bottle of mercury beneath the floorboards in his laboratory, which, if P arsons had planted it ther e, was extremely careless for someone so e xperienced with danger ous chemicals . Ho wever, Parsons was indeed somewhat reckless with chemicals, which in the end may have been his doom.

On Tuesday, June 17, 1952 at 5:08 p.m. an e xplosion erupted in the lower level of 10711/2 S. Orange Grove Ave. that was heard as far as a mile away. Tragically and horribly, Parsons was at the center of it. A second e xplosion occurred almost immediately, as if set off b y the first. Flame consumed Parsons, as Babalon had predicted, and his right for earm w as blo wn off so

completely that only a fe w small pieces of it were found. The blast broke his other arm and both legs, left a “gaping hole” in his jaw, and shredded his shoes. Parsons was conscious when upstair s neighbors dragged him out fr om under an old-fashioned washtub, which can be seen in a photo r eproduced in the *Los Angeles Times* on June 18.

The lower level of the coach house had been a stable , and the upper level had been servants’ quarters, which had been turned into apartments that P arsons, his mother , and Camer on occupied until June 1. At the time of the blast, P arsons’ mother, Ruth, had taken a summer position as caretaker for one Mrs. Carpenter, who was out of town with her husband, residing at 21 W. Glenarm St. with her friend Helen Rowan who was confined to a wheelchair.

The explosion blew the stable door s from their hinges , knocked over two walls, and tore a hole in the ceiling as w ell as a hole in the floor. Smaller doors and windows were blown from their frames, and two greenhouses 25 feet away were shattered. A grand piano upstairs shifted enough for one of its legs to br eak, and a chandelier fell. Windows were broken on the home next door. Artist Salvatore Ganci, one of the upstairs residents, was on the phone when the e xplosion occurred. “I was lifted off the couch b y a violent blast,” he told the *Pasadena Star-News* reporter. The apartment w as shared by 21-year-old Jo Ann Price , an actr ess and model, as w ell as actor Martin Foshaug, 31, and his mother Alta. No one upstair s was hurt.

Ganci and Mr s. F oshaug rushed do wnstairs and pulled P arsons from the wreckage, propping him up against a wall until paramedics could get there. Parsons was coherent enough to giv e them instructions as he w as loaded into the ambulance and tak en to Huntington Memorial Hospital at 1 00 Congress St. in P asadena. The remarkable man died there at 5:45 p.m., some 37 minutes after the explosion. In March 1946, P arson had cryptically written, “ And in that da y [the manifestation of Babalon] my work will be accomplished, and I shall be blown away upon the breath of the father.” As Parsons lay dying, according to John Bluth, his last words are said to have been, “I wasn’t done.” According to Jane Wolfe, Cameron related them as, “Who will take care of me no w?” But it w as not he who needed looking after , as he had passed on into the other side that he had so fervently tried to bring into this world.

From his birth, both Parsons and his mother shared a strong bond. After the sickening tragedy, Ruth Parsons and Helen Rowan went to a friend's home at 424 Arr oyo Terrace, where her son and Camer on had been staying since June 1, which was described in a newspaper as a "two-story mansion." Another friend, Mrs. Nedia Kibort, age 59, of 32 0 Waverly Drive, was in the house with them, wher e pr esumably they sought a little comfort after the dr eadful news. Ruth was drinking heavily, and took tw o Nembutals fr om a pr escription she received after the explosion. When she learned of her son's death she shouted, "I can't stand to liv e without him. I adored him." She also said that she had a gun upstairs and then gulped the remainder of the sleeping pills—23 or 43, depending on the account—while Mr s. Rowan looked on helplessly. Another friend, a nur se named Nellie Smith, arrived soon after and found R uth slumped o ver in a living room chair. She phoned Dr . J.R. Huntsman of 65 N. Madison A ve., who pr onounced Mr s. P arsons dead at 9:06 p.m. Her death w as investigated by Lt. John C. Elliott, who had been at the scene of her son's death, and by Sgt. Woody Pollard.

Cameron w as buying supplies for the Me xico trip at the corner grocery when the e xplosion occurr ed. The *Pasadena Independent* reported Cameron as being "stoic in the face of her double loss." She told reporters and police that she and her husband w ere headed to Mexico for a vacation. Their luggage was sitting in the hallway at 424 Arroyo Terrace when Ruth committed suicide. Others told a different story.

Cameron's brother Robert, age 28, of 125 N. Rampart Blvd., stated that Parsons was headed to Mexico on business, "the nature of which was v ery secr etive." Pr esumably R obert w ould kno w, as he and Cameron's other brother, sister and father all worked at JPL. Someone else told the *Independent* that Parsons was going to set up his o wn business in Mexico, but Cameron insisted it was merely an extended trip. The amount of baggage, however, indicated a long-term stay. In fact, the couple w ere headed next to Israel, where they intended to raise a family.

Motorcycle officer Ernie Ho vard w as the fir st policeman on the scene of the explosion and was later joined by Donald M. Harding, a Pasadena police for ce criminologist. Har ding found numer ous containers of explosives, many of which had already been placed outside by Parsons, in preparation for the trip, which w as obviously not for sightseeing. The legality of the e

xplosives was questioned, and the 58th Arm y Or dnance Disposal Unit w as called in fr om F ort MacArthur to help determine the cause of the e xplosion, as well as to inspect the immediate area and the house at 424 Arroyo Terrace for further e xplosives. As photogr aphers took flash photos , Har ding shielded certain of the r emaining bottles, afraid that the light w ould set them off as well. The Disposal Unit removed the rest of the explosives from the pr emises, and the inv estigators and other s began to speculate as to what caused the blast—nitroglycerin? Rocket fuels? Or the more exotic-sounding trinitrobenzene or PETN? [46]

In addition to the e xplosion, Har ding found numer ous scientific notes in the debris, most of which contained chemical formulas. One interesting document contained Parsons' notes concerning industrial explosions: "Texas City Disaster Report: 433 dead, 128 missing. [The explosive] cannot be detonated with rifle bullets , blasting caps or dynamite." Parsons also had notes about a Los Angeles electroplating company explosion in 1947 that killed 15, and another e xplosion at Aerojet that killed eight. He had been a member of the coroner's jury on the 1947 incident.

A more curious fragment was obviously not a part of his pr ofessional work. The note r ead, "Let me kno w th y misery totally . And spare not and be not spared. Sacrament and Crucifixion. Oh my passion and shame . . . Mother s . . . Sisters . . ." Unfortunately, he got his morbid wish, as did his de voted mother.

Harding eventually determined that the blast occurred just behind Parsons, and to his right, just above floor level. Had the building not been of heavy timber construction, it probably would have been leveled. As it w as, the entire half of the lo wer level containing his lab was gutted. Firemen reported that they noticed a "funny odor" when they arrived on the scene. Interestingly, considering she had purportedly found mercury there, Cameron said that the explosion occurred *beneath* the floorboards, *lifting them up*.

Martin Foshaug said that Parsons "had been e xperimenting in an effort to pr oduce a 'Super' fog effect for motion pictur es," but this work certainly had nothing to do with the blast that killed him, since Parsons had left his special effects job with the Bermite P owder Company on the previous Friday, June 13.

On June 19, the newspapers reported that the cause of the e xplosion had been determined to be “fulminate of mer cury,” a very sensitive and powerful detonator that Army Ordnance had stopped using because of the number of deaths it had caused. Ho wever, the size of the explosion seems e xcessive for fulminate of mer cury. Har ding, who had just joined the P asadena police for ce, was assigned to his first investigation with the P arsons blast. He could ha ve both been inexperienced and had based his conclusions on hearsay, rather than science, about mercury. Harding was told by a neighbor that Parsons was manufacturing the mer cury explosive (illegally) in the gar age laboratory. It was to be his last batch, Parsons had told the neighbor. Obviously, he w as right. Har ding searched for other stor age places Parsons might ha ve maintained, and stated that enough e xplosives remained in the lab to “blo w up half the block.”

Harding’s determination of the bomb device’s origin was based on his discovery in the rubble of ingr edients needed to make fulminate of mercury. Shr apnel from a coffee can w as found in the w ooden floor and in the w alls, radiating out fr om the hole at gr ound zero, which led Harding to surmise that Parsons must have reached for the can when it dr opped but w asn’t quick enough. This de velopment, Harding inferred, was why the e xplosion occurred low to the floor and why Parsons’ right arm was missing, since it w as closest to the blast. Harding believed Parsons was mixing the chemical in the can when it dropped. Fulminate of mercury, he reasoned, “is made w et and gets more sensitive as it dries . A little friction, per cussion, heat or agitation is enough to set it off.”

Based on Har ding’s findings , Detectiv e Lieutenant Cecil H. Burlingame was told by the coroner’s office that no inquest would be held. After an autops y performed the ne xt day b y Deputy Cor oner I.G. Mcfarland, the death w as ruled accidental and attributed to “multiple injuries of entir e body .” Burlingame told r eporters that police had received reports in 1942 that Parsons was illegally storing explosives at 1003 S. Orange Grove Ave. Nevertheless, a search conducted in conjunction with the FBI had turned up nothing.

The *Pasadena Independent* talked to J.H. Arnold of the Bermite Powder Compan y, who told them that P arsons had sta yed long enough with his company to finish a special effects pr oject. Parsons had, in fact, been w

orking on a “r ocket pr opellant detonation and pyrotechnic short-interv al dela y” project, which w as a confidential program at the compan y. Contrary to Camer on’s testimony, his coworkers related that he had told them he w as heading to Me xico to continue his research with explosives and miniatur e special effects. Arnold had asked him to stay long enough to see the tests of the confidential project, but P arsons was eager to get to Me xico. “He had been working har d,” Arnold told the inv estigators, also stating that Parsons was extremely safety-conscious . Said Arnold, “He w orked carefully, had a thorough knowledge of his job and was scrupulously neat.” But Har ding called him “ criminally negligent” in the w ay he handled the explosives at his home lab. Arnold was surprised to hear that Parsons had so man y explosives at home, which police learned had been there at least six months. Arnold added that Parsons at one time had his o wn powder magazine near Rialto, which w as a legal storage place. His home , however, was in obvious violation of the Pasadena fire marshal’s code. In addition, Arnold noted, six or eight months earlier P arsons talked about going into the dynamite business. Other comments came from T.E. Beehan, Secretary-Treasurer of Aerojet, who described P arsons as a “loner” and said, “He lik ed to wander, but he was one of the top men in the field.”

In their r eportage about his life and death, the *Pasadena Independent* dug up some of the older stories about P arsons when he was at 1003 S. Orange Grove and recalled that in 1942 a letter had been sent from San Antonio, T exas by “A Real Soldier,” who wr ote that a “black magic” cult was operating in the house. The same Detective Lt.

Burlingame had inv estigated the letter incident and w as told b y Parsons that the “ cult” was merely a “non-sectarian and non-political fraternity” which “held open forums on Sunda y afternoons, and discussed philosophy, religion, personal freedom, and fortune telling.”

However, in 1944 police investigated a small fire at the house, during which inv estigation Detective O.A. Nelson found “ considerable paraphernalia . . . which indicated that spiritual seances ma y have been held in the house .” Said Nelson, “It appear s to be the home of some type of secret society.” Nevertheless, the matter was dropped.

Smelling a good story , the sensationalistic *Independent* announced in its

obituary that on July 19 “secret rites” were held for John Parsons at Turner & Stevens Mortuary, Marengo Ave. and Holly St. However, the funeral home referred to the ceremony as a “private prayer service .” The obituary used his birth name , Marv el, and reported that Cameron was the only survivor. It also stated that cremation took place earlier that da y at the Liv e Oak Cr ematory and that his body was embalmed by W.T. Stahlman. The Social Security number giv en on his death certificate , pr esumably pr ovided by Cameron, is incorr ect and belongs to a Vir ginia Wilson, also of California, who had been born the same y ear as P arsons and who lived until 1980.

On July 2 0, a priv ate service w as held for R uth Parsons, also b y Turner & Ste vens, and her body w as cremated as well. She was survived by a Mr s. Emma Aldrich of Santa Monica, California, apparently no relation to lodge member Meek a Aldrich.

On June 22, both the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Pasadena Independent* addressed a new development: George W. Santmyer (or Santmyers), a Los Angeles chemical engineer w orking with Parsons in a Na val Ordnance Department r esearch project since January 1, suggested to the paper s that something w as amiss with the inv estigation. Police had found 5 00 grams of cordite (an ammunition component) and six filter papers containing fulminate of mercury residue in Parsons’ trash can, which was either at the back of the lab or just outside it, depending on the account. “F or Parsons to have disposed of such materials in that manner ,” said Santm yer, “w ould be the same as for a highly trained surgeon to operate with dirty hands. It’s completely out of char acter for him.” Criminologist Har ding, when asked, admitted that P arsons’ supposed sloppiness seemed “incongruous.” Harding also said that enough cordite and fulminate of mercury were found in the trash to blow up the garbage truck and drivers who would have picked up the can.

In his statement to the papers, Santmyer argued that someone else must have put it ther e, that P arsons would not ha ve disposed of highly dangerous explosives at the last minute , nor w ould he ha ve prepared them for tr ansportation on a long driv e into Me xico, as everything he needed to produce fulminate of mercury could be easily pur chased once he arriv ed ther e. Santm yer also stated that Parsons was “on the tr ail” of a completely ne w explosive that “w as to be far superior to an y existing commercial

blasting material" and much safer to handle. According to Burlingame, however, Santmyer's questions w eren't "sufficient to w arrant us r eopening the case ." Nevertheless, Santmyer was not the only person who smelled something fishy in the untimely death of John Parsons.

Something else w as allegedly found after the death of P arsons that didn't make the 1952 *Los Angeles Times* . Amateur r ocket advocate Harold Chambers, who worked at a technical bookstore in downtown Los Angeles for 40 y ears, was told on separ ate occasions b y both Harding and Santmyer that an "odd, bizarre, fairly big box, decorated with snakes and dr agons" w as found in a tr ailer at P arsons' r esidence. The odd bo x was found to contain home mo vies of Parsons and mother ha ving se x, not only with each other , but also with Ruth's "big dog." According to reports from Pasadena police, passed down to their friend Har old Chambers, we now have circumstantial evidence that John P arsons indeed fulfilled his goal to " exteriorize [his] Oedipus complex."

Ruth Parsons' "big dog" also made it difficult for police to attend to her suicide scene . After being attack ed by R uth's agitated beast, Pasadena police officers shot the dog in the head.

Chambers also r eports that Don Har ding, ha ving disco vered a syringe among the blast debris , partially filled with a morphine-lik e substance, believes that P arsons' drug use contributed to his mishandling of explosives.

The high-reaching pioneer Parsons was gone but not for gotten. In 1969, *Darker Than Y ou Think* author Jack Williamson wr ote, "In Pasadena not long ago, w alking acr oss the gr ounds of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, I was jolted to see Parsons' name on a memorial tablet set up to honor the first martyrs to space. He had written me once about testing multicellular solid-fuel rockets designed after those in my story 'The Crucible of Power.' When I first heard about his death I w ondered if m y own r ockets had killed him, but [L.] Spr ague de Camp tells me that he dropped a bottle of picric acid." It w asn't picric acid, but he had the right idea.

Rather than any "martyrs to space ," the JPL plaque actually honors the first successful series of JATO tests, which began on Halloween 1936. The monument w as unveiled on Hallo ween 1968, the 32nd anniversary of the original date. "The Crucible of P ower," contained in the anthology *The Best*

of Jack Williamson, describes the multi-cellular, solid-fuel rockets as follows: “[I]t was a four-step rocket, each step containing thousands of cellules, each of which was a complete rocket motor with its own load of alumilloid fuel, to be fired once and then detached.” No doubt P arsons would have also been inter ested in the solar r eligion of the story’ s Martians, whose high priest w as called the “Lance of the Sun.”

While the police w ere content to let the tr agedy stand as an accident ostensibly caused b y his pr ofessional endea vors, others felt it had to do with the occult. In *The Occult Explosion* (published 1972), Nat F reedland intervie wed filmmak er R enate Druks , who said, “Cameroun [sic] stayed with me at m y Malibu Beach house for six months, pulling herself together after Jack died. I ha ve every reason to believe that Jack Parsons was working on some very strange experiments, trying to create what the old alchemists called a homunculus, a tiny artificial man with magic po wers. I think that’ s what he w as working on when the accident happened.” Druks e vidently was the source of Michael Hoffman’s statement in *Apocalypse Culture* that “In 1952 Parsons was blown up in what is officially described as an accident but which others have said was a homunculus experiment that went bananas.” Before moving in with Druks, Cameron stayed briefly with Wilfred and Helen Parsons Smith. She also spent time alone in the desert.

Parsons’ friends did not belie ve he killed himself, at least intentionally. Indeed, he had too man y plans, as r eflected b y his dying words: “I w asn’t done .” It is some what ironic that these w ere the dying w ords of the man who claimed to be the Antichrist, while , according to the gospel tale, the dying words of Christ were the opposite: “It is finished.”

Druks, who later w orked with a vant gar de filmmak er K enneth Anger and who also studied magic under Jane W olfe, r elated that Parsons was going to Mexico “to experiment with his new formula for an explosive ‘more powerful than anything yet invented.’” According to JPL employee Charles Bartley, Parsons told him he was going there to start a fireworks company, yet von Kármán stated that Parsons told him it was an explosives factory—which is admittedly not much different—that the Mexican government had hir ed him to set up. V on Kármán also said that Parsons told him the government was furnishing a 17th-century castle for him to stay in while he was there. Since there are few if an y castles in old Me xico, perhaps P arsons

or v on Kármán confused *palacio* for *castillo*. Camer on r elated a similar account but stated it w as in Baja California, r ather than Me xico proper. These e xperiments were to be a step to ward their e ventual plans for working with the Israelis.

Decades later Camer on spoke of the e xplosion as coming fr om under the floorboar ds, implying mur der rather than an accident or suicide. In the OTO newsletter *The Magical Link* , she stated that a good suspect w as the e xplosives expert against whom P arsons had testified and who had been par oled immediately prior to the fatal explosion, a r eference to Captain K ynette of the Los Angeles "sp y squad," found guilty of murdering another police officer in 1938. The weapon Kynette used w as a car bomb , and P arsons' testimony had been crucial in his conviction.

In recent years, one r esearcher was informed b y the City of Los Angeles' Hall of R ecords that Parsons' will was still sealed and that he would have to get permission from the executor to obtain a copy. The executor was Ed F orman, who is dead. When I visited the Hall of Records, the clerk was unable to find an y listing for Parsons' will in the probate records for Los Angeles county. The will, in fact, w as never probated.

On August 13, 1952, just a month after his tr agic death, *People Today* published a half-page piece on Parsons in its "People in Crime" section, which included a delightfully sinister photo of P arsons. The article was entitled "L.A.'s Lust Cult" and is worth quoting in full, to demonstrate the general attitude toward Parsons at the time. The bold print appears in the original.

Rich, rock-ribbed Pasadena, famed for its r oses, the Califor nia Institute of T echnology, and as a r etirement haven for Easter n millionaires, looks like the last place a black magic cult dedicated to sex would thrive. Never theless, the Church of Thelema (the name means "will"), **a cult practicing sexual per version, has been making converts of all ages, sexes, there since 1940. Among the believers: many pr ominent r esidents of the Pasadena-Los Angeles ar ea; at least one member of Hollywood's movie colony.**

The existence of the cult, r eported to police in an anonymous letter mailed from San Antonio, Texas, in September '42 by "A Real Soldier" and in an October ' 44 letter, was only pr oven this June with the "accidental" death of

high priest John W . Parsons.

Parsons, bushy-haired, 37-year-old scientist who was one of the inventors of JATO (jet-assisted take-off), was killed when an explosion r ocked his lab in the car riage house of the old F .G. Cruickshank [sic] estate along Pasadena's "Millionair e's Row ," where he lived with his artist-wife and mother. **Within hours of her son's death, the elder Mrs. Parsons had committed suicide by swallowing 50 sleeping pills. The estate, investigators soon learned, had been the 'T emple' wher e Thelemites ran their strange sexual orgies.**

Parsons had ser ved as high priest since the death, in ' 44, of local prophet Wilfred Smith, a disciple of Aleister Cr owley, called "the sinister man" by French authorities. Crowley's chief commandment: **"Take your fill of love . . . with whom ye will."**

Says an ex-member: "The inner circle followed this rule, especially at the fer tility rites at the spring and fall equinoxes." **Torch-carrying hooded cultists, chanting prayers to "Thou burning rapture of girls, that disport in the sunset of passion," concentrated on "begetting ar oyal race befor e dawn." Other rituals: a Black Mass,** patterned on a r eligious ceremony, in which High Priestess disr obed to tune of uninhibited chanting; **"purifying" fir e tor ture.** Members ar e accepted in the cult—which also existed in Chicago and New York—on a probationary basis, must pass thr ough 10 degrees before qualifying for participation in sex rites.

With the bizarre death of Parsons and the suicide of his mother, Thelemites have gone fur ther underground. But, still active, they conducted a secret funeral for their dead high priest.

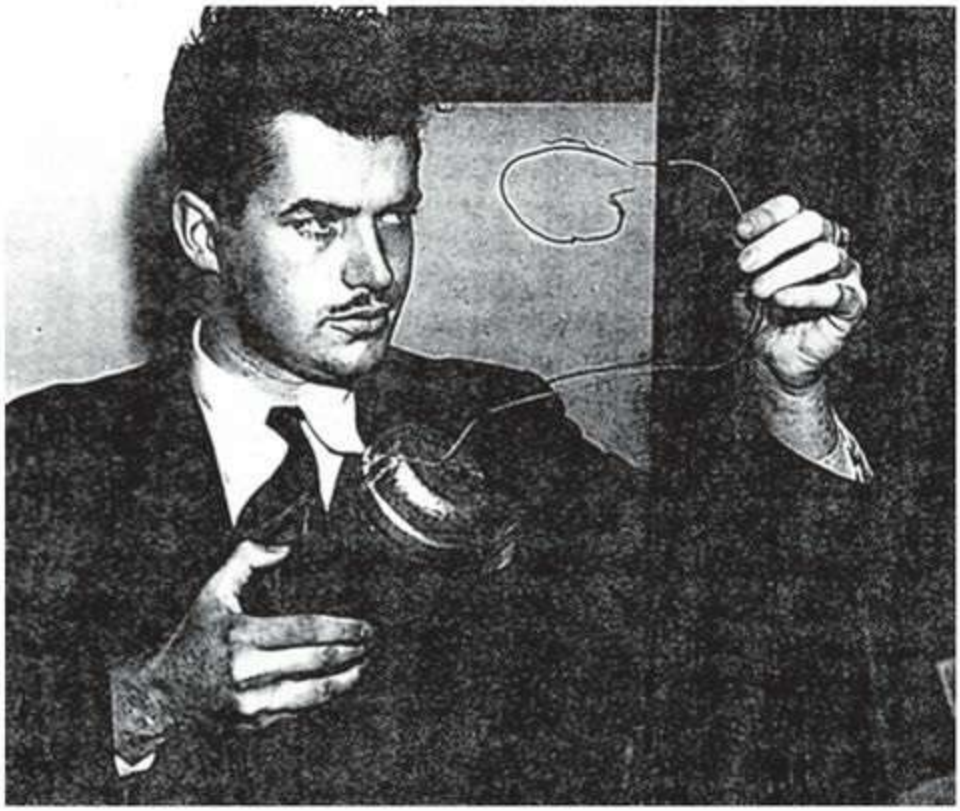
A sidebar to the article reads:

Thelemites follow code set down by founder Aleister Cr owley, Englishman who died 25 years ago after a stor my life. Expelled from France and Italy, exiled from England, Cr owley published his teachings under the title: *Equinox*. Its gist: Do anything you please.

Both the article and the sidebar contain a number of erors, including the date of Crowley's death, which was in reality in 1947, and of Smith's, which was in 1957.

In addition, at the time of the e xplosion Parsons was not the “high priest,” since, as early as January 1946, Crowley wrote a letter naming a successor to P arsons. Indeed, b y October of the y ear Cr owley had become disillusioned with Parsons and wrote to Culling, “About J.W. P. [Parsons]—all that I can say is that I am sorry—I feel sure that he had fine ideas, but he was led astray firstly by Smith, then he w as robbed of his last penn y b y a confidence man named Hubbar d.” And in December he wrote, “I have no further interest in Jack and his adv entures; he is just a w eak-minded fool, and must go to the de vil in his own way. *Requiescat in pace.*”

Although Crowley may have found Parsons naïve and ineffectual, there are many who r ealize his k ey role in the aer ospace/military industries, and not a fe w who belie ve he accomplished amazing things esoterically , lea ving behind an e xtraordinary legac y that included “flying saucers,” which would not be surprising considering his fervent interest in space and his attempts both chemically and alchemically to “shoot for the star s.”



In fact, Kenneth Grant writes, “The [Babalon] Working began . . . just prior

to the wave of unexplained aerial phenomena now recalled as the ‘Great Flying Saucer Flap.’ Parsons opened a door and something flew in.” Indeed, this notion has entered certain fringe areas of pop culture.

Crowley sensationalizer F rancis King mentions that P arsons felt flying saucer s “w ould pla y a part in conv erting the w orld to Crowleyanity.” When Camer on later became obsessed with flying saucers she ne ver whisper ed a w ord about P arsons’ inter est. She believed saucers were not high-tech, but r ather a “r estoration of the elemental powers.”

An unconfirmed statement attributed to conspiriologist John Judge claimed that Parsons may have flown with the pilot K enneth Arnold, who in 1947 sa w several silver disks over Mt. R ainier in Washington State and coined the term “flying saucer” to describe them.

Another Aerojet employee, Daniel F ry, saw a saucer in 195 0 and went on to become an activ e figur e in 195 0s contacteeism. Some wonderful footage of him in his final y ears is r ecorded in the film *Farewell, Good Brothers*. Still another occult-oriented employee in the aerospace engineering industry , the Californian Orfeo Angelucci, claimed to have been a contactee in the 195 0s.

Other momentous events were attributed to Parsons. Referring to the date of Parsons’ death, Arthur Lyons said, “It was 13 years later, the period of human matur ation, that twins w ere born in San Francisco—the counter culture and the Chur ch of Satan.” Ger ald Suster, in his biography of Israel Regardie, credits Parsons with helping birth the sixties.

After his death, Camer on continued P arsons’ w ork—not the Babalon W orking, but that inv olving per sonal gr owth and e xploration. She moved to the desert, living in an American artists’ colony in northern Me xico (San Miguel de Allende), ne xt door to Da vid Siquieros and Max Ernst’ s wife Lenor a Carrington. Camer on and Soror Estai (Jane W olfe) struck up a v oluminous corr espondence. Here’s hoping that this potentially fascinating communication will be made public by the OTO or whomever has it.

On December 15, 1952, Camer on wrote to Jane W olfe, “Se ven years ago, Jack began an oper ation which he r eferred to as the Babalon Work—and this set into motion the second part of a great force which w as divided into thr ee. Aleister Cr owley began the first, three years before I was born [a

possible r eference to F rater Achad]. I ne ver knew the man, y et his desir e ga ve me birth. His paternity sings in m y v eins." Camer on is sa ying that she is the third and final part of that "for ce"; she referred to her life as one of the "str angest and wildest v oyages into the unkno wn that has ever been told."

Cameron declared that Babalon actually came to e xist as her o wn self. This lar ge claim comes despite the kno wn fact that P arsons believed Camer on was an elemental who he hoped w ould later giv e "birth" to Babalon. He w ould not ha ve pr edicted Babalon' s ph ysical manifestation to occur within se ven years, as he did in 1949 in *The Manifesto of the AntiChrist*, if she were already on earth. After the three-day working of March 1946, Parsons proclaimed, "Babalon is incarnate upon the earth today, awaiting the proper hour of Her manifestation." In 1949 Parsons revised this statement, perhaps anticipating Cameron's return. The year 1949 must have been significant to Parsons—the book that purportedly came from Babalon is titled *Liber 49*.

Parsons' *Songs for the Witch Woman* is dedicated to Cameron, "in whom She is incarnate ." But in "The Star of Babalon" P arsons says that Her spirit is within all w omen who pr oclaim their equality to men. If this is indeed the case , a billion women on planet Earth ar e now wearing Babalon's tiara.

In 1953, Cameron wrote:

For some months now I have been aware of the heightening intensity of what I call a thir d beam of hearing. I can describe it as the sound of a radio beam that one picks up on shor twave. It is independent of my normal hearing—if I close my eyes it is not affected in any way. There are moments when it is so intense that I can actually tune it in—by turning my body. It seems to be heightened in power by the presence of some other humans . . . I have the feeling that ther e is someone on the other end, or let me say that I have the feeling that the beam transcends time and space and that I am hearing the sound of my transmitter echoed in incr edible places.

While her auditory experiences were being inhumanly heightened, Cameron saw a flying saucer. In a letter to Jane Wolfe dated January 22, 1953, Camer on speculated the UFO was the "w ar-engine" mentioned in *The Book of the Law* III: 7-8 ("I will give you a war-engine. With it ye shall smite

the peoples; and none shall stand before you.") Eight years earlier Crowley wondered if the atomic bomb constituted this engine.

In another letter Cameron wrote about:

[Mars], which I believe, is somehow my home. Earth will explode in a collision with the two Star Islands which ar e reported now moving towards each other in the heavens [r eference uncertain]. And resulting ther efrom, my star , the gr eat Seven-pointed Star of Babalon, shall be bor n in the heavens. [Mar ginalia scribed by Gerald Yorke in 1969 on a copy of *Liber 49* states Camer on is "nutty as can be."]

In order to contact her "Holy Guardian Angel," Cameron began to illustrate *Songs of the Witch Woman* with her "desire." We don't have any record of Camer on contacting her Guardian Angel, but soon w e will have Cameron's illustrations of Parsons' poem in print, or so it is said by their current owner, Carl Abrahamsson.

The fateful y ear of 1953 also sa w the death of Mark M. Mills , Parsons' former associate, in a helicopter crash at an Eniwetok atomic bomb test site. Mills holds some of the solid fuel patents with Parsons and also co-authored some once-classified papers on solid fuel.

Next year Cameron played both the Scarlet Woman and Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction, in K enneth Anger' s short film, *Inauguration of the Pleasur e Dome*. Notorious for his under ground films and authorship of the *Hollywood Babylon* books, Anger is also known for rescuing Crowley's paintings and ephemera in the Sicilian "Abbey of Thelema," from which Crowley and company were tossed by Benito Mussolini in 1932. In a letter to W olfe, Cameron said that rituals acted out in Anger' s film helped bring do wn Babalon.

The wido wed Camer on married a man named Sharif Kimmel. With some bikers on Catalina Island in 1955, she destroyed the black box from the Babalon Working. Cameron had a daughter, Crystal, as well as gr andchildren and gr eat-grandchildren. Wilfr ed Smith, with whom she had lost contact, died in 1957. Jane W olfe died a fe w months later, in 1958.

In 1957, a drawing by Cameron in Wallace Berman's *Semina* magazine pr ompted a r aid on the F erus Gallery b y the police and an obscenity trial,

after which Berman serv ed a few days in jail. Dean Stockwell paid his bail. The pictur e showed a sun-headed man penetrating a w oman fr om the r ear. A photo of Camer on w as on the cover. Cameron the painter was also involved in the L.A. art scene of the 1960s, with Geor ge Herms, Bruce Connor and W allace Berman, and continued showing her work well into the 1980s.

The American actors Dennis Hopper and Dean Stockw ell are said to have been Cameron's roommates. In fact, Cameron appeared with Hopper in the 1961 Curtis Harrington horror film *Night Tide*, playing a Lo vecraftian "Deep One"—her fe w lines spok en in "R'ly ehian." Harrington appeared in *Inauguration of the Pleasur e Dome* as well; his film *Wormwood Star* is an impressionistic profile of Cameron.

Ithell Colquhoun' s *The Sword of Wisdom* , written in 1975, mentions an " OTO Lunar Lodge" with which Camer on was supposedly working around 1960, somewhere in California. However, it does not seem to ha ve been charter ed, and those who kne w Camer on sa y there was no lodge at all.

On Halloween 1968, JPL honored the 32nd anniversary of its nativity by dedicating a plaque behind its visitors' center. During the dedication, JPL held a lar ge celebration, even going so far as to invite wives and e x-girlfriends who had been pr esent during the tests. But they did not invite Ed Forman or Rudolph Schott, both of whom were still alive and living in the area. Nonetheless, Forman donated an old rocket and papers he had saved from the original tests, all of which have since been lost.

In 1969, the *London Sunday Times* ran an article on L. R on Hubbard's early inv olvement with magick. The Chur ch of Scientology protested, and in r eturn the paper printed v erbatim the Church's statement concerning Hubbard's involvement with Parsons.

> Hubbard br oke up black magic in America: Dr . Jack Parsons of Pasadena, California, was America's Number One solid fuel r ocket expert. He was involved with the infamous English black magician Aleister Crowley who called himself 'The Beast 666.' Crowley ran an organization called the Or der of Templars Orientalis over the world which had savage and bestial rites. Dr . Parsons was head of the American branch located at 100 Orange Gr ove Avenue, Pasadena,

> California. This was a huge old house which had paying guests who were the U.A.S. nuclear physicists working at Cal. tech. Certain agencies objected to nuclear physicists being housed under the same roof.
>
> L. Ron Hubbard was still an officer of the U.S. Navy [and] because he was well known as a writer and philosopher and had friends among the physicists, he was sent in to handle the situation. He went to live at the house and investigated the black magic rites and the general situation and found them ver y bad.
>
> Parsons wrote to Cr owley in England about Hubbar d. Cr owley "the Beast 666" evidently detected an enemy and war ned Parsons. This was all proven by the correspondence unearthed by the [London] Sunday Times. Hubbard's mission was successful far beyond anyone's expectations. The house was torn down. Hubbard rescued a girl they wer e using. The black magic gr oup was dispersed and never r ecovered. The physicists included many of the sixty-four top U.S. scientists who were later declared insecure and dismissed from government service with so much publicity.[47]

Despite the vilification and br ouhaha, in 1972 the International Astronomical Union in France honored Parsons by naming a crater on the moon after him. "Parsons Crater" is at 37^0 N latitude, 171^0 W longitude, and, appropriately enough, on the *dark* side of the moon. Due to the Ranger survey, the first to photograph the dark side and reveal hundreds of new craters in need of names, NASA turned to its own past to provide them. Parsons was the only GALCIT scientist to earn this honor, in which Frank Malina, now living in France, may have had a hand.

Parsons' buddy, Ed F orman, died in 1973 of heart tr ouble while employed by Lockheed in El Segundo. Despite his lifelong closeness with Parsons, Forman never joined the OTO. (Parsons' mother, Ruth, also worked at Lockheed during the w ar.)

It is evident that Parsons was considered an important if dangerous figure by the authorities. His FBI file, which was requested prior to the Freedom of Information Act as part of a JPL history project, is heavily censored. Although FOIA rules have since changed, when one requests the file one

normally gets a photocop y of the file that has already been processed. There have been no updates, simply because the FBI hasn't noticed or doesn't want to bother with it.

Among the many reasons Parsons was investigated was not only the "black magic" but also his association with communist s ympathizers. Fellow GALCIT group member, Frank Malina, whose efforts served the U.S. quite effectively, was also a victim of the Communist witchhunts. After the w ar, Malina had become head of the scientific research division of UNESCO in France, a post he held until his political beliefs and longstanding member ship in the Communist P arty were discovered. He r esigned and turned to a successful car eer in "kinetic art." Several of his pieces are still on display in England, and the art/science journal he founded, *Leonardo*, is still published b y MIT. Malina died in France in 1981.

It may have been Malina who first introduced the late John Parsons to the UFO-researcher and debunker, Jacques Vallee, who was the role model for the F rench scientist in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind.* Vallee suggests that JPL would deny Parsons ever existed; but, as e videnced by a memorial plaque on JPL grounds (and numerous conversations with the staff of JPL) the opposite is actually the case.

After the w ar, group leader and r ocket scientist v on Kármán w as invited to Germany to inspect various Nazi research installations like the one at P eenemünde. This visit occurred at the invitation of Hap Arnold and his other old friends in Washington. Von Kármán's autobiography, *The Wind and Beyond*, contains pictures from his trip to Germany, including one shot of him interrogating a German scientist. As pr eviously noted, v on Kármán w orked in German y during the decade follo wing World War I. After W orld War II, he w as instrumental in recruiting Nazi scientists to the United States. Declassified documents r efer to this effort as "Oper ation P aperclip." Some of Parsons' letter s to Camer on ar e fr om Alabama, wher e P aperclip rocket scientist Wernher von Braun was a prisoner of w ar, and it is possible the tw o had met. V on Kármán spent the ne xt two decades engaged in various aeronautics research projects and died in 1963, a giant among men.

GALCIT member and alleged spy Hsue-shen Tsien had an interesting if troubled life after the war ended. Evidently he was accused of being a

Communist simply because he was Chinese, as, years later, Malina's widow told an interviewer, "We never saw him at any of the cell meetings." This incident embarr assed Tsien so much he decided to r eturn to China—something he thought he'd never do. However, immigration stopped him at the docks and detained him for fiv e years, by which time, the authorities figur ed, an ything he kne w w ould be obsolete . Then they deported him, and subsequently he singlehandedly built the Chinese missile pr ogram from scratch using what he had learned at GALCIT. Tsien's fascinating life is r ecounted in Iris Chang' s biography, *Thread of the Silk Worm.*

In 1989, a collection of Parsons' unpublished essays, *Freedom Is A Two-Edged Sword*, appeared and renewed interest in the man, which has sur ged with the adv ent of the W orld Wide W eb. The book includes Parsons' commentary on the "Red Scare." Much of the other material reproduced in *Freedom Is A Two-Edged Sword* deals with two of Parsons' post- OTO projects: The Gnosis and The Witchcr aft. The former was an attempt to set up a regular form of worship for Parsons and for whomever would follow.

Parsons christianized his Gnosis by having Sophia, the incarnation of wisdom, play the role of the daughter of God, equating her with the Holy Ghost. In Parsons' version, Sophia's union with Christ was equal to God. In "tr aditional" Gnosticism, Sophia w as usually the mother of God, and Christ the savior of both. Only in Parsons' work do we find the alternative formula, to which end Parsons wrote "On Magick," "The Gnostic Creed," and "The Gnostic Doctrine ."

Parsons' other project was The Witchcr aft, a course on magick for the layman. Surviving documents include "Basic Magick: Fundamental Theory and Practice," "Manifesto of The Witchcraft," and a few chapters of a book called *The Cup, the Sword and the Crux Ansata*. Parsons wrote the manifesto June 15, 195 0, but he still thought enough of Babalon to note this as the y ear 4000. However, the date is inconsistent with pr evious Babalon-influenced dates . In 1946, Hubbar d pr oclaimed the year Babalon 4063, and in 1949 Parsons dated *The Book of AntiChrist 4066*. The year 4000 may indicate a change of his numbering system; it is not a misprint.

Parsons' purpose in creating these texts was clear: To Cameron he wrote, "Simplicity has been the k ey to victory in all the idea w ars and, at present,

Magick does not have it. There is the skeleton in the Rights of Man [Crowley's *Liber OZ*], and the coverings in the main literature. But the true body has never been shown forth."

In addition, short outlines on "General Field Theory" that Parsons left unfinished could almost be taken as precursors of the late Rupert Sheldrake's "morphogenetic field theory ." Notes on W agner's *The Ring* take us to the final chapter of *Freedom*: it is "The Star of Babalon," already mentioned. Part of Parsons' *The Book of Babalon* , this chapter consists of instructions received from Babalon herself for the Magical Child. Much like the magical letter in the beautiful gnostic "Hymn of the P earl," these instructions w ould serve to effect an *anamnesis* (awakening) on the child's part, to further her mission on Earth. This text serves as further e vidence that it w as not Camer on who was to become Babalon, but someone as y et unknown.

As noted, Camer on occasionally sho wed her art, but she ne ver sold it. In fact, much of her early w ork she destr oyed. The r est remains in private collections, although several showings have been held, such as at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1989. Camer on w as included posthumously in the "Beat Gener ation" sho w at the Whitne y Museum in Ne w York in late 1995. Near the end of her life she requested permission fr om JPL to giv e her gr andson Silv er a tour , wanting him to see wher e his "gr andfather" had worked, a request that was granted. Cameron died of cancer on July 24, 1995, aged 73.

Having reviewed the life of John P arsons in more depth than most writers, I ha ve come to the conclusion that he has been misunderstood—even misrepresented. Historians of rocketry and the space program seem to have underestimated his contributions to the field, while writers on the occult have romanticized him as some sort of great sorcerer. Without his contributions to both solid and liquid fuels , the American space program would not be wher e it is today. In less than five years, Parsons accomplished what Robert Goddard could not do in a lifetime. The list concerning the top leader s in the world of rocketry contained in v on Kármán's 1958 letter, written the same y ear as the solid-fueled *Explorer I*, was self-aggrandizing, as v on Kármán himself admitted. To wit, Malina had written to v on Kármán concerning opinion on who were the top 10 Americans who had contributed to the program. "Starting, of course, with ourselves, the list is of the follo wing,"

von Kármán replied. Parsons name was at the top.

While one cannot tak e von Kármán's name off the top of that list, there is justification for placing P arsons' name abo ve Malina' s, as Parsons is the individual who per severed in the face of r epeated failures, and Parsons and the others funded their own research until someone (Hap Arnold) finally took notice . Furthermore, Parsons was the one in the field blo wing up rocket after rocket until he found just the right combination that w orked. V on Kármán encour aged him, but Parsons did the difficult and e xtremely hazar dous w ork. Ev erything today in the field of solid fuel r ockets is essentially P arsons' work, if slightly modified. Obviously , it cannot be said that P arsons singlehandedly won the war, but his JATOs were deployed in several areas for its last thr ee y ears. In addition, the global compan y A erojet w as founded upon Parsons' innovations with solid fuels, and nothing else.

It is lik ely that P arsons' underestimation had little to do with his occult activities, which seem to ha ve been tolerated as one of man y eccentricities associated with his brand of genius. Amo Smith had his pith helmet, Malina was a communist, and v on Kármán talked about the golem—this w as the normal state of affair s at Caltech. In r eality, Parsons is forgotten because he was not a part of Caltech pr oper, not a "scientist" in the stuffy sense of the word. He did not hold a degree from an accredited university.

One of the biggest questions r emaining is wh y P arsons and Forman abandoned r ockets altogether at the end of the w ar. Their early work was diverted into other dir ections as the w ar demanded new technologies, yet it was not they but Malina who took up pur e rocketry after the w ar ended. Was Parsons' work with the OTO more important now than his profession? Did Aerojet make him sign a non-competition agr eement? W as he r esting on his laur els when he should have been pursuing other fields of research? Or was there simply no funding for such things an ymore? Hopefully, and likely, considering Parsons' mentality, his original inter est was mor e than a matter of mer e profit, but what had started as a passion got lost in the distraction of war and personal upheavals.

Today, P arsons' inspir ed ingr edient for r ocket fuel, ammonium perchlorate, is causing its o wn pr oblems. A ccording to Jonathan Parfrey, president of Physicians for Social Responsibility, toxicological studies by the

EP A show that perchlorate is an endocrine disruptor which also harms fetal development. Perchlorate has also been linked to conditions like aplastic anemia and h ypothyroidism. After having leached into gr oundwater at A erojet's Sacr amento, San Gabriel and Chino Hills facilities , multimillion-dollar per chlorate cleanups ar e currently underway.

In contradistinction to the under estimation in the field of r ocket science and the aerospace industry, Parsons' accomplishments in the arcane sciences have been highly overrated and grossly exaggerated. As a magician he was essentially a failure. As a Thelemite he learned the har d w ay what w as r equired. He lo ved Cr owley's "La w" but couldn't adhere to it—though he tried harder than most. He violated the rules, undertook unauthorized and unorthodo x magical oper ations, and claimed the gr ade of *Magister Templi* without first completing all the gr ades below it. He couldn't handle w orking under authority—his ego w as too big. His r ecord of failur e is v aluable in that regard. He w as a gr eat pr omulgator of thelemic ideals in his essays, but as an idealist his elitism ruined his w ork. Indeed, some would say he was guilty of *hubris*, which the gods always punish.

In his (short) per sonal and business liv es P arsons also scor ed poorly. His romantic naiveté led him to trust those whom he should not have trusted. He chose some v ery good friends but also some very bad associates. He wisely joined in on the founding of A erojet, only foolishly to sell out a fe w short years later, which, admittedly, even the great man v on Kármán did. Ho wever, there is little e xcuse but naiv eté for what P arsons did with the mone y he r eceived from that sale. In addition, his mix-up with the Israelis was perhaps a simple mistake in judgement, but one that he could ha ve avoided quite easily. He admired them but misjudged U.S. policy.

The whole matter of his death has also been gr eatly overemphasized. Suicide is simply not tenable, and the only clear possible murder suspect is K ynette, the cr ooked cop, although ther e ma y be others. A U.S. scientist who attempted to pass go vernment "secrets" onto the Isr aelis, and who w as loading e xplosive chemicals on a truck bound for Mexico and then Israel, may have won himself a few anonymous enemies.

Despite these suspicions and the fact that P arsons was an e xperienced handler of explosives, his death may truly have been accidental. As noted, P

arsons sw eated pr ofusely, as tw o separ ate acquaintances have testified, one of them also pointing out ho w hot it was that June day in 1952. Even a safety-conscious expert could let a tin can slip out of a sw eaty hand. The hole in the floor, the shrapnel stuck in lo w places, the loss of the right arm, all point to a dropped container . And it is questionable just ho w "safety-conscious" was a man who stored all sorts of dangerous explosives in his kitchen, on the back porch, in unlicensed labs in residential areas.

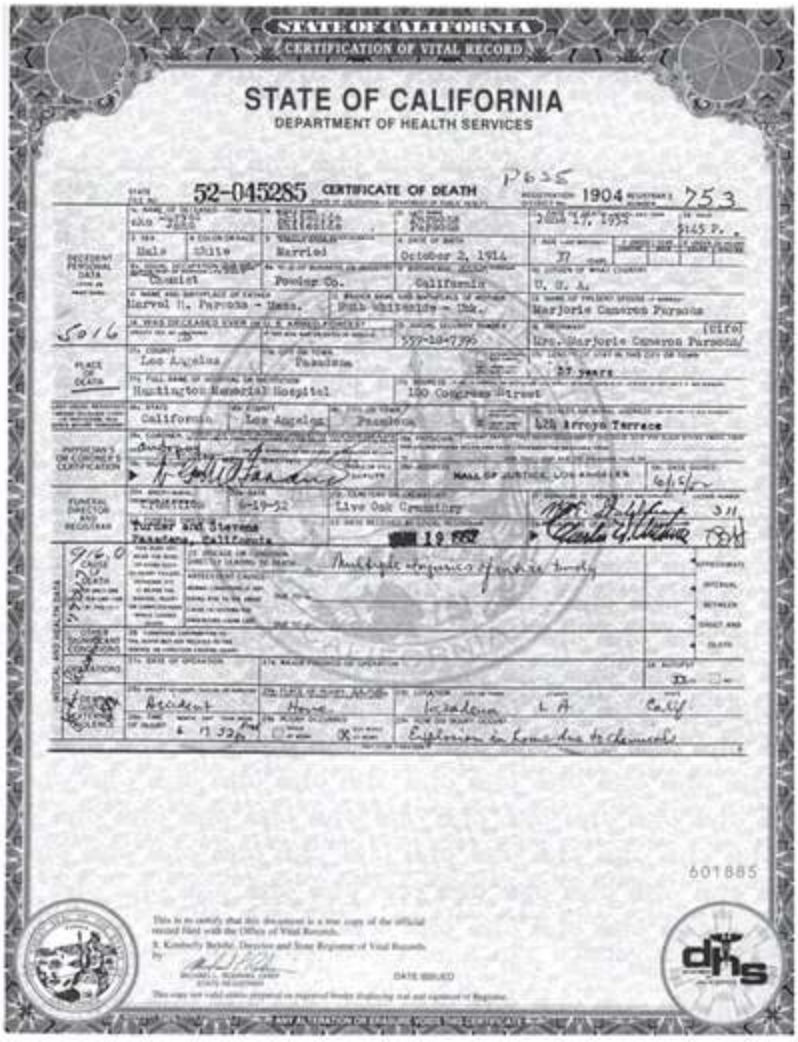
The only evidence not easily e xplained is the detectiv e's original comment that the e xplosion occurred *behind* Parsons, and the fact that the trash can was full of explosive substances which should not have been ther e. Mur der cannot be ruled out, but a sad accident seems more likely. Had the notorious Los Angeles police investigated the scene, w e could consider a co verup. But it w as the *Pasadena* police, assisted b y Arm y Or dnance. If someone had w anted him dead, a car bomb would have been easy enough to rig. But fulminate of mercury is not stable enough for a mur der scheme that had to be clever enough to fool an expert. Had it been mixed ahead of time and planted in his lab, Parsons would have noticed it right away. It's true that fulminate of mercury becomes more dangerous as it dries, but as soon as P arsons had seen a can of dried fulminate of mer cury, he would've known someone had planted it ther e. Of cour se, unless it was beneath the floorboard, as Cameron claimed to have discovered, and cordite with a fulminate of mercury fuse may be a possibility.

Based on the evidence—admittedly obscured by 40 years of time—it seems that John P arsons' death w as accidental. Of cour se, there remain the accusatory remarks of Cameron—not the best witness for later events, but she was the closest person to Parsons at the time of his death. F urthermore, the disco very of additional e vidence might lead one to believe that it was murder.

As a boy, I read an odd little science fiction story, one that Parsons never could have seen, as it was published in 1955, three years after his death. The title w as "End as a W orld," and the author w as F.L. Wallace. I found the story in an anthology edited b y H.L. Gold entitled *The Third Galaxy R eader*, for which I paid a dime at a gar age sale. "End as a World" wasn't the best story in the book, but it w asn't the worst, either. It was a different kind of story. Its surprise ending stuck in my memory for a long time.

The story started with newspaper and radio accounts of the end of the world. Day-to-day activity stopped as people look up and wait for the end. Suddenly a loud noise was heard, and a bright flash of light was seen overhead. It was not what was expected, i.e., the explosion of the planet: It was the first rocket ship. It was indeed the end of the world, the story concluded, but the beginning of the univ erse.

John P arsons, self-pr ofessed Antichrist, ma y not ha ve br ought about the end of the w orld, but through his contributions to science he played a part in bringing about the beginning of the univ erse.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CERTIFICATION OF VITAL RECORD

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

52-045285 CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

1904

Male | White | Married | October 2, 1914 | 37 years | California | U. S. A.

Harvel H. Parsons - Mass. | Polk Whiteside - Okla. | Marjorie Cameron Parsons

Los Angeles | Pasadena | 37 years

Huntington Memorial Hospital | 150 Congress Street | 424 Arroyo Terrace

Cremated | 6-19-52 | Live Oak Cemetery

Turner and Sierens, Pasadena, California

Accident | Home | Pasadena | L A | Calif

Explosion in home due to chemicals

601885

Afterword

Helen Parsons Smith died July 27, 2003 at Tahoe Forest Hospital, close to her longtime home in King' s Beach, CA. She w as survived by her son K wen Smith and his wife , along with their two children and their two grandchildren. Helen was the oldest OTO initiate at the time of her death, the numer ologically significant age of 93. Her obituary sa ys that for a long period in her life "she may well have been the only regularly active priestess in the world who carried forth the celebr ation of the mass of *Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica*." Per her wishes there was no funeral; she enjoyed her privacy to the end.

One other notable event took place since this book w as first published four y ears ago. I w as able to unco ver the inspir ation for Parsons' Black Pilgrimage , which I discussed in chapter 1 0. The source was M.R. James' short story "Count Magnus ," published in 1904. It has been reprinted in several places; my copy is in *Collected Ghost Stories* , published b y W ordsworth Editions , Ltd. in 1992. I believe the story may also be found online .

The fictional Count Magnus De la Gardie was a late 16th-century/ early 17th-century mage residing in a huge manor in Vestergothland, Sweden. He seems to have been named for a real Count Magnus who lived in the same ar ea from 1622 to 1686, but the tw o have nothing else in common. The center of the story is the m ysterious Black Pilgrimage he w as said to ha ve undertak en, what form it actually took, and what he brought back from it. The nature of the pilgrimage itself is never discovered, though the thing he brought back is hinted at. It seems to ha ve been some sort of supernatur al beast, a demon or familiar spirit that protected Magnus even in death.

James does specify the destination of the Black Pilgrimage. It was Chorazin in Palestine (now in Israel), the city which Jesus cursed, the city which later legends said w ould birth the Antichrist, the city which Parsons also named as the destination of his pilgrimage . Its unique black ruins still stand; the y are black because they are made of the local basalt. Of all of Chor azin's ruins, the best-kno wn is the unfinished synagogue. James has Magnus write of his *Liber nigr ae peregrinationis*, "If any man desires to obtain a long life, if he

would obtain a faithful messenger and see the blood of his enemies , it is necessary that he should first go into the city of Chor azin, and there salute the prince [of the air].” The story doesn’t specify ho w long Magnus lived, but based on internal evidence one may deduce it was around 120 years. The story does mak e clear that Magnus obtained his faithful messenger, and did have occasion to see the blood of his enemies.

On F ebruary 28, 1946 P arsons wr ote *Liber 49* , a book fr om Babalon whose 58th v erse sa ys, “Thou shalt mak e the Black Pilgrimage.” No further details w ere given until P arsons wrote *The Book of AntiChrist* a few years later. In *The Book of AntiChrist* , the first section of which is entitled “The Black Pilgrimage ,” Parsons wrote that he began his pilgrimage in November of 1949, in response to a dream he says came from Babalon. He describes the pilgrimage as an astral working conducted in his temple.

Parsons wrote, “And I went into the sunset with Her sign, and into the night past accursed and desolate places and cyclopean ruins, and so came at last to the City of Chor azin. And ther e a gr eat tower of Black Basalt was raised, that was part of a castle whose further battlements reeled over the gulf of the star s. And upon the to wer was this sign [a circle inscribed with an inverted triangle]. And one heavily robed and v eiled showed me the sign, and told me to look, and behold, I sa w flash below me four past lives wherein I had failed in my object.” P arsons goes on to name these past liv es; I ha ve described each of them in detail in chapter 1 0. After this he writes , “And ther eafter I w as tak en within and saluted the Prince of that place . . .,” echoing Magnus’ instructions to go into the city and salute the Prince of the Air. Judging from hints in Parsons’ letters to Karl Germer in 1949 and later, his purpose was not long life, a faithful messenger, nor to see the blood of his enemies; it was always the furtherance of Thelema. (But if the further ance of Thelema necessitated an y of these , P arsons sur ely hoped the y w ould follo w. He specifically names Christianity—all of Christianity—as the enem y of mankind.) The pilgrimage itself is not mentioned again in his surviving writings.

In *Ghosts & Scholars* issue 26, Jamesian scholars Rosemary Pardoe and Jane Nicholls discuss the possible literary and historical sources for James’ Black Pilgrimage . The y document James’ kno wledge of the apocryphal *Revelation of the Pseudo-Methodius* (fourth century) in which Chor azin is fir st mentioned as the birthplace of the Antichrist, as well as his familiarity with

W. Bousset's *Der Antichrist*, published in 1895, which also documents the legend. James' favorite story b y the early Irish horr or writer Sheridan Le F anu w as "The Familiar," in which the phr ase "the prince of the po wers of the air" occurs. The phr ase originates with St. P aul, who r efers to Satan in this manner in Ephesians 2:2, and James w ould have known about its Biblical origin as well.

Pardoe and Nicholls also document James' familiarity with John Dee. James edited a list of Dee' s manuscripts in 1921, compiling his list from several others and from original sources. One of the titles on Elias Ashmole's list was *Liber Peregrinationis Primae* (*The Book of the First Pilgrimage*). The author s speculate that this title influenced James' *Liber nigr ae per egrinationis* (*The Book of the Black Pilgrimage*). This may be, but it only takes a basic knowledge of Latin to translate such a title. (Dee's book describes magical conversations recorded during a trip to Kr akow in 1583.)

Pardoe and Nicholls e xcel when the y sho w just ho w P arsons could've encounter ed James' story—and it occurr ed only months before he received his instruction to go on the Black Pilgrimage from Babalon. Samuel D. Russell wrote an essay on James which appeared in the Fall 1945 issue of *The Acolyte* (a fanzine). Russell and Parsons both frequented the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS), so it's fairly certain that James was discussed there. Parsons received his instructions on February 28, 1946, which seems to imply he had been reading James recently.

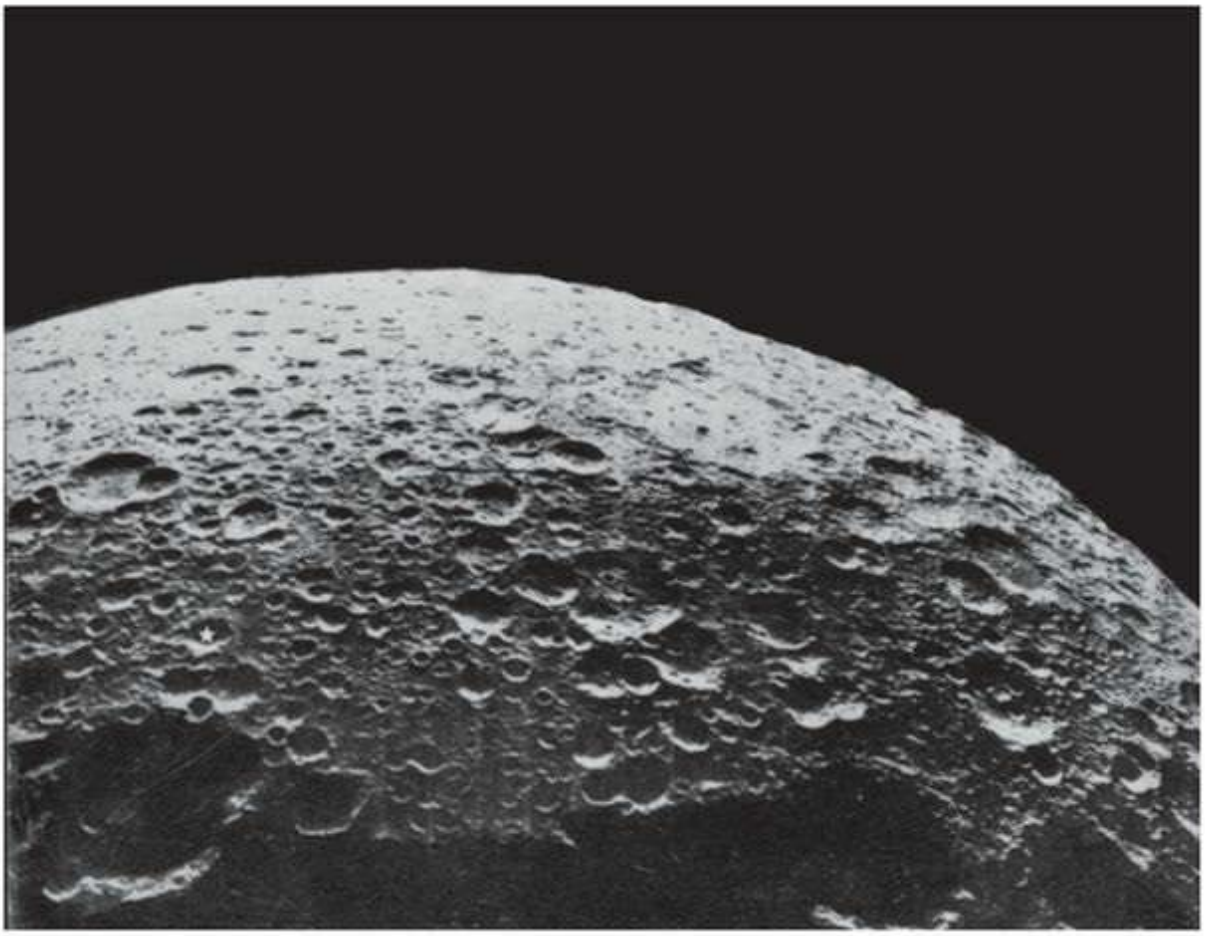
Unless further e vidence appear s, it appear s that M.R. James invented the Black Pilgrimage as a liter ary device based on legends of Chor azin, r ather than its being a genuine magical tr adition. Parsons took inspiration for a magical working based on this concept, just as he had tak en inspir ation fr om other fantas y w orks (for instance, his fa vorite no vel w as Jack Williamson' s supernatur al thriller *Darker Than Y ou Think* , discussed in chapter 4.) R ecall Crowley's letter criticizing Parsons for taking such a lo w form of literature so seriously. Despite the criticism, Parsons continued to take his inspiration wherever he would find it.

James doesn't tell us how Count Magnus died; his death is a mystery, as is Parsons'. In contrast, however, Magnus had something that Parsons didn't. He had his "faithful messenger ," the thing that he brought back from his Black Pilgrimage, the thing that protected his estate e ven after his death. P arsons doesn't seem to ha ve brought anything back from his pilgrimage to

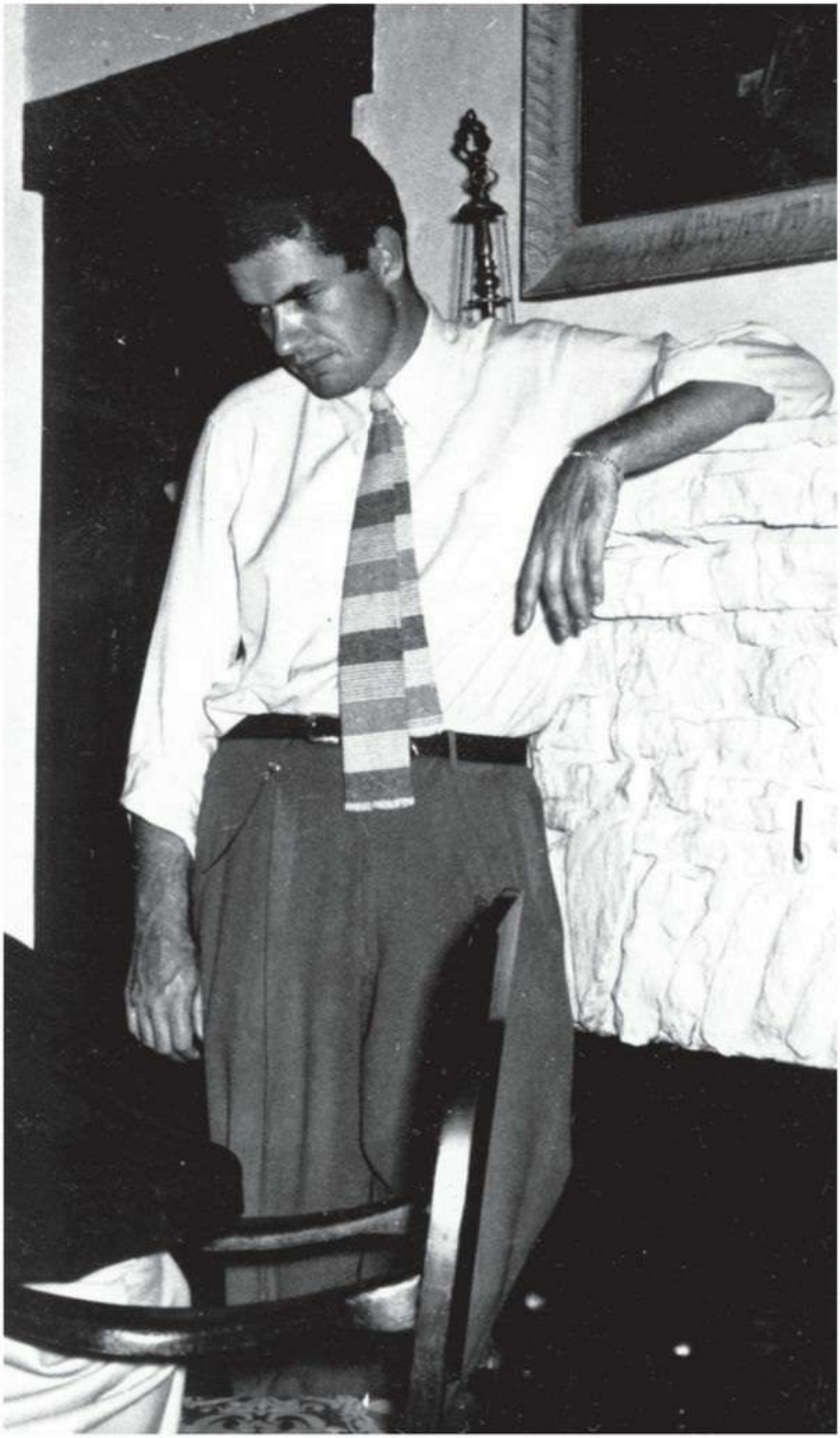
protect him, and his messengers were few. The foremost of these were Cameron and Karl Germer, who preserved his writings and his message for futur e gener ations. They are gone now, and with the passing of Helen the story has come to a close.

Ruins of Chorazin

The starred crater, at 37^0 N latitude, 171^0 W longitude was named “Parsons Crater” in 1972 by the Inter national Astronomical Union. Parsons Crater is on the dark side of the moon.



Parsons at the Parsonage.



John Parsons seen in the 1933 graduation photo fr om University School, top row, fourth from right.

Pasadena’s private University School.

Photos courtesy of Pasadena Historical Museum

John Parsons stands above JATO at Arroyo Seco, June 4, 1943.

Arroyo Seco test site, 1936.

Photos courtesy of JPL Archive

In the Arroyo Seco Test Site, John Parsons, left, and Ed For man, right, show greater caution than usual by wearing pith helmets.

Arroyo Seco Test Site in late 1936. John Parsons in dark vest, Ed Forman bending over in white shirt; Frank Malina is probably the individualbending over in a light-colored vest.

Photos courtesy of JPL Archive

Rudolph Schott, Amo Smith, Frank Malina, Ed For man and John Parsons relax on Halloween, 1936.

Mannequins of the scene above used for the JPL Open House “Nativity Scene.”

Photos courtesy of JPL Archive

Posed photo in August 1941 of Theodor e von Kármán (in black), surroundedby Clark Millikan, Martin Summerfield, Frank Malina and Captain Homer Boushey.

Photo courtesy of Aerojet

Parsons, second from left, Forman, third from left, Malina, center and cohorts in an Ercoupe test.

Photo courtesy of JPL Archive

Very first Ercoupe flight in August 1941. The figure at left is either Ed Forman or John Parsons.

200-pound solid fuel JATO cannisters, the invention of John Parsons, as produced for Allied use in World War II.

Photos courtesy of Aerojet

In this photo, taken the last day of the Er coupe tests in August 1941, Helen Parsons is seen among friends and family, third from the left. Parsons and Forman are once again seen fourth and third from the left of the test plane.

Founding members of the Aerojet Engineering Corporation at Wright Field. Photographed in front of the Havoc Bomber are: Theodore C. Coleman, *director of Aerojet*; Parsons, *vice-president*; Edward S. Forman, *vice-president production*; Andrew G. Haley, *president*; Theodore von Kármán, *founder and chairman of the board*; Frank J. Malina, *secretary-treasurer*; Martin Summerfield, *vice-president engineering*; and T. Edward Beehan, *general manager*.

Photo courtesy of JPL Archive

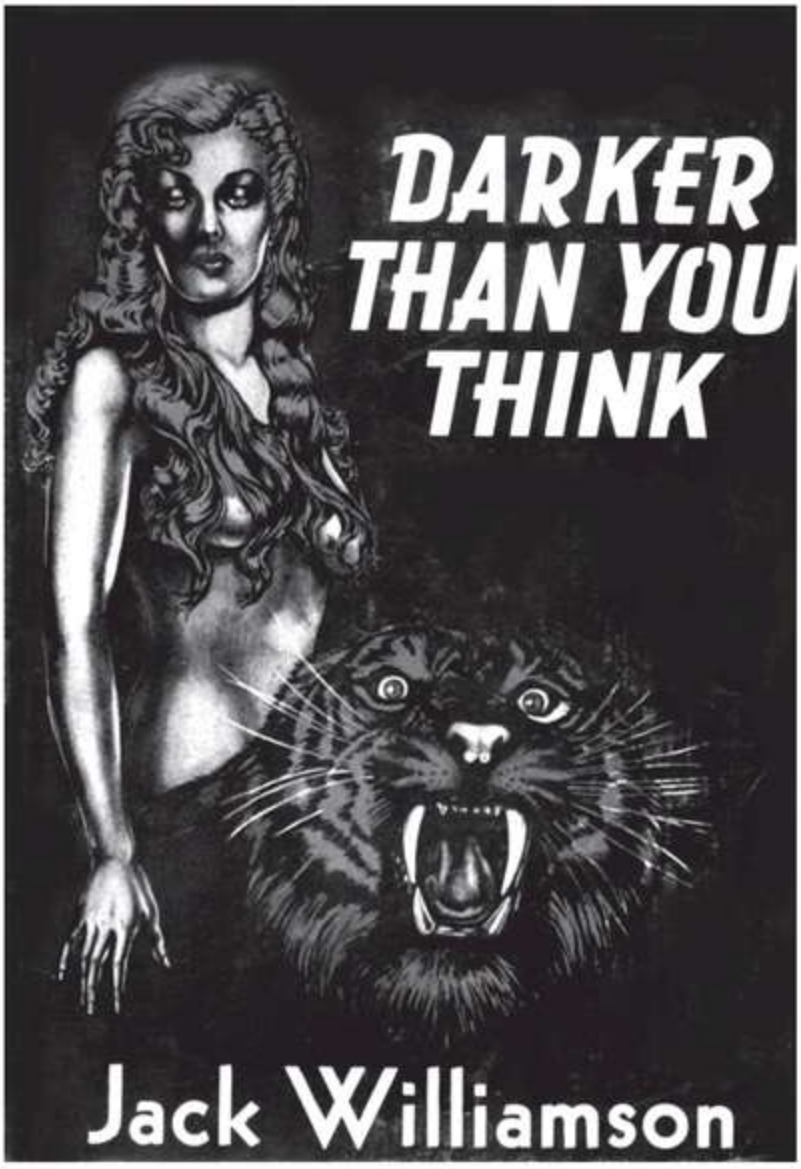
Photo courtesy of Aerojet

Monument at Jet Propulsion Laboratory celebrates its birthday, first erected on Halloween, 1968.

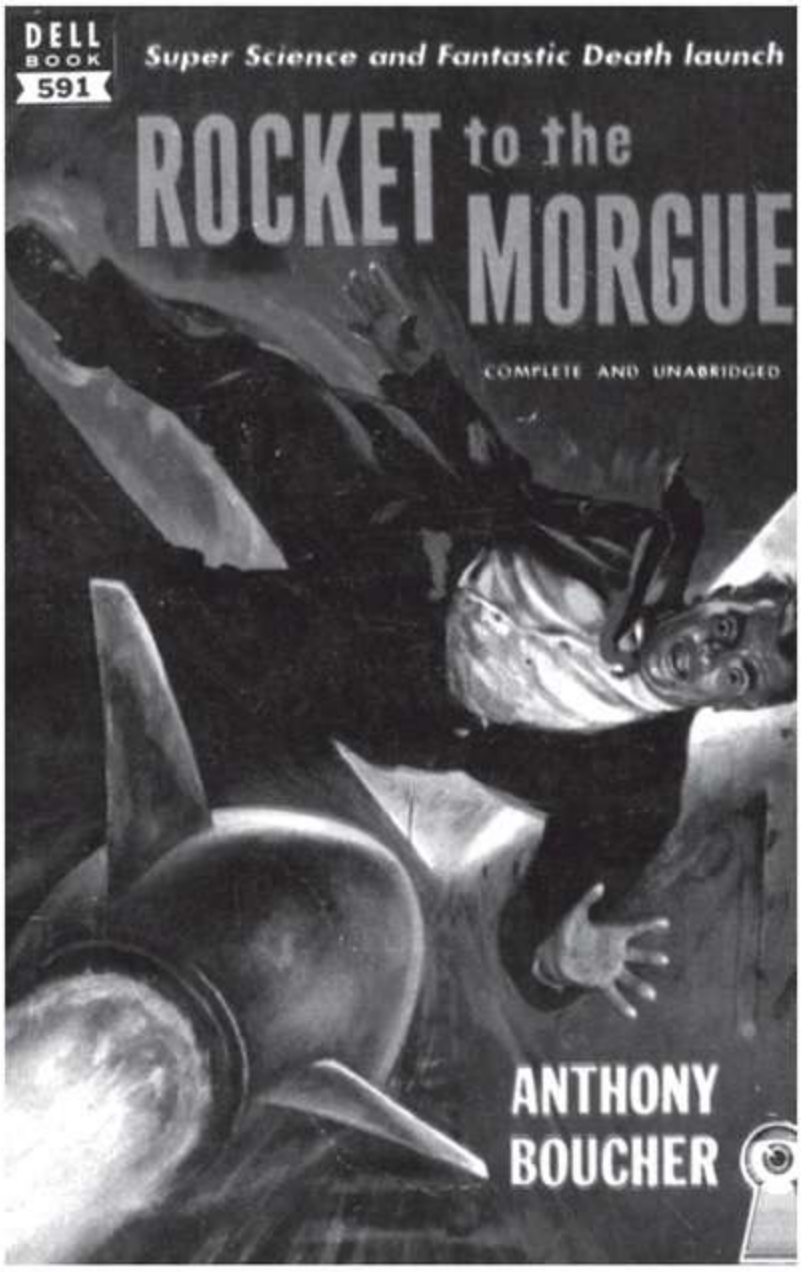
Photo by Greg Bishop

THIS TEST LED TO THE CREATION OF THE
CALCIT ROCKET
1936 FORMAL GOVERNMENT SPONSORSHIP
OF CALCIT ROCKET RESEARCH IN 1939-1940,
AND THE SUBSEQUENT FOUNDING OF THE
JET PROPULSION LABORATORY IN 1944.
INDIVIDUALS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE
FIRST CALCIT ROCKET TESTS WERE:
EDWARD S. FORMAN
JOHN W. PARSONS
WILLIAM C. ROCKEFELLER
CARLOS C. WOOD

John Parsons believed the 1940 stor y, *Darker Than You Think*, presaged the appearance of Babalon. This is the cover of the 1948 edition.



Rocket to the Morgue, published by John Parsons' sci-fi soirée friend, A.H. White, under the pseudonyms Anthony Boucher and H.H. Holmes, includes a Parsons-like character named Hugo Chantr elle, a Caltech scientistobsessed by For tean phenomena.



The Parsonage of 1003 S. Orange Grove in Pasadena. The house no longer stands.

Aleister Crowley, the man John Parsons called “Father,” making the sign of Pan.

Cameron’s painting of Jack Parsons, “Dark Angel.”

Cameron, mid-1940s.

Parsons and Cameron on the town.

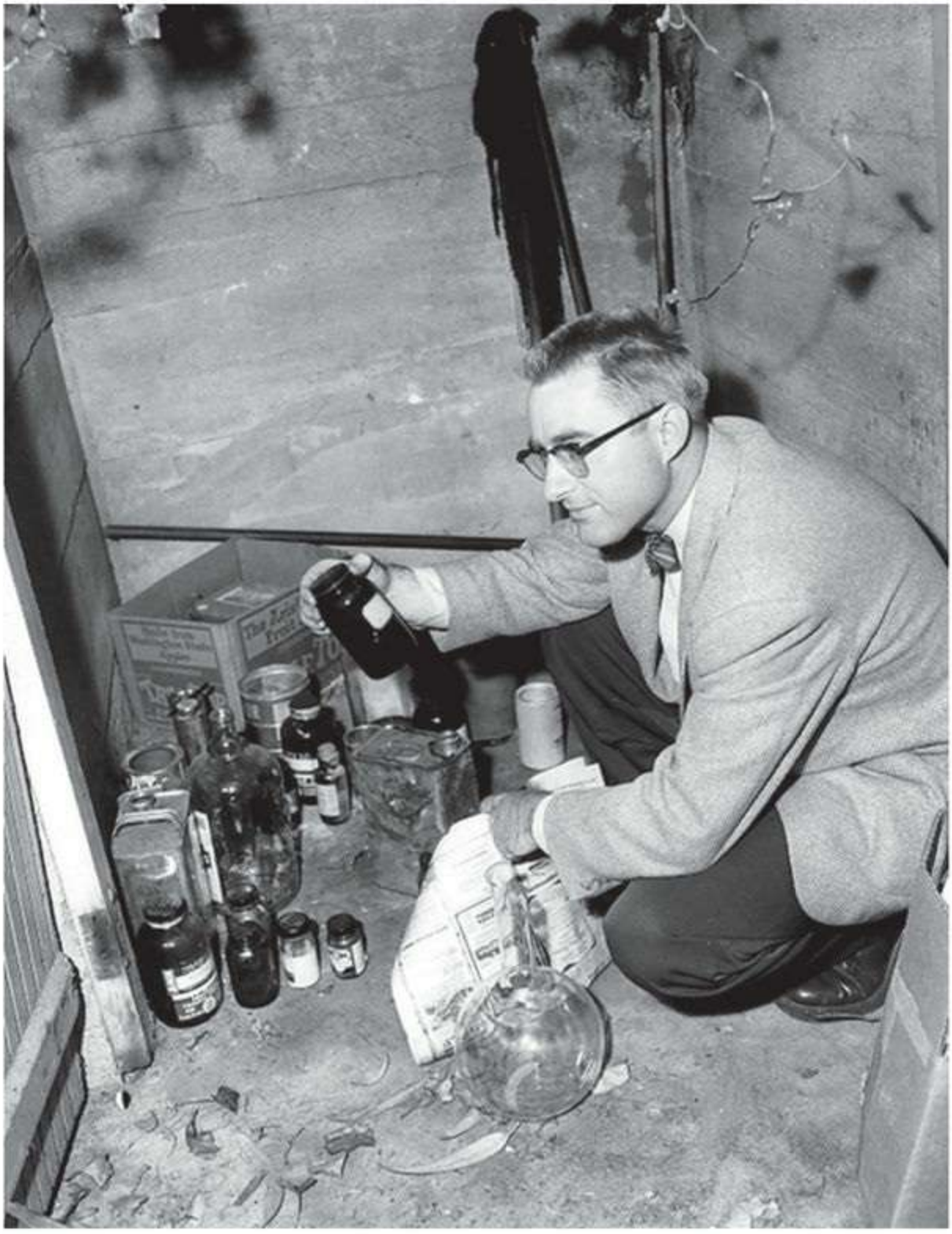
Renate Druks in Kenneth Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, filmed in 1954.

Parsons sits candlelit in the probable presence of Cameron.

Parsons’ magickal black box discovered after his explosive demise.

Pasadena police officer with luggage probably meant for Parsons' and Cameron's impending Mexico trip at the house where Ruth Parsons committed suicide.

Pasadena criminologist Don Hardly inspects chemicals stored near the fatal site.



Officer Ernie Hovard at the scene of the explosion.

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1

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2

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3

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4

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5

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6

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7

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8

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9

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10

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11

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12

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13

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14

Ley helped popularize a number of scientific miscellany such as dinosaur survivals, space travel, and Atlantis. He had a long-r unning column in *Galaxy* Magazine. He also seems to be the one who informed the rest of the world of the Nazis' preoccupation with the occult. His books are relatively easy to find in used bookstores.

15

Webster's.

16

Some sources say it was 1913, which means there is a discrepancy in Crowley's account. Perhaps Reuss saw the book while it was still in manuscript for m.

17

The next year, GALCIT-61c replaced GALCIT-53 as the fuel of choice.

18

Cameron said that E.R. Eddison was Parsons' favorite science fiction autho.r Parsons read Eddison's *The Worm Ouroboros* to her.

19

From infor mation on file in the Pasadena Centennial Room of the Pasadena Central Library.

20

It was Crowley's wife, Rose Kelley, however, who had picked out the stele—in a trance.

21

It was later said that this man founded the gay rights movement.

22

Bartley would later work with Parsons on special ef fects for the film industr y.y.

23

The primary reference on Babalon remains Crowley's *Liber 418*, reproduced in *Magick* and elsewhere.

24

See Cr owley's *Liber A vel ARMORUM* in *Magick* for instr uctions for constr ucting each weapon as well as other magical accessories.

25

Some versions read XARP—the final E is added to denote the element of Air .

26

The concerto used by Parsons was Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 2 in G Minor (Op. 63)*, which was the only r ecording available at the time. Recor ded on December 20, 1937, it was per formed by the Boston Symphony Or chestra, and conducted by Ser ge Koussevitzsky, while Jascha Heifetz played violin. Prokofiev (1891-1953) was still alive at the time. Lasting just over 34 minutes, it is a haunting r ecording, though sentimental in places. It is unclear whether the Scribe restarted the record when it finished, or if the participants just allowed it to r un until it stopped. The original was a 78-rpm phonograph record, and its CD is available on Biddulph from England. It is also available as item number 9167 in the Pearl-Koch catalog, entitled *Jacha* (sic) *Heifetz Concerto Recordings Vol. IIBrahms et al.*, a version released October 13, 1995 as par t of a two-disc set.

27

This occurrence is curiously similar to the nine r egular knocks that Whitley Strieber felt confirmed the existence of his other worldly Visitors in his "non-fiction" book *Communion*. Strieber later said that these nine knocks signified his readiness to move to the next evolutionary level, just as thr ee knocks signify a Master Mason is r eady to enter the Lodge for initiation.

28

UFO researcher Jacques V allee says Parsons claimed to have met a V

enusian in the Mojave deser t during the course of 1946. The V enusian appar ently was the implied source of *Liber 49*.

29

The definitive version of “Isle of the Dead” (Op. 29) is conducated by Sergei Rachmaninov himself. Recorded April 20, 1929 with the Philadelphia Or chestra and released on 78, it lasts 18 minutes, which means Parsons let it r un out during the invocation, or else the Scribe had to restart it several times. The recording is available on the Magic Talent label as CD48038, as well as on a CD entitled *Rachmaninoff Conducts Rachmaninoff*.

30

The Golden Dawn’s spelling of “tar ot”; as with INRI it has multiple meanings.

31

Possibly a reference to the seventh and third Enochian Calls.

32

4063 dates the Year 1 to 2017 BC, the meaning of which is uncer tain.

33

A statue of Pan was destr oyed.

34

The “universal solvent” sought by the alchemists, an obvious r eference to sexual fluids.

35

May scholars of Latin for give my crude translations.

36

Crowley’s original reads “Babylon.”

37

The “black box” is evidently the same as the scr ying device used by Dee and Kelley. Karl Germer thought the sign “imprinted upon it” to be a small cir cle inside of which was inscribed an inver ted triangle—the sign for water , but inside a cir cle. Cameron remembered otherwise.

38

Following this instruction, Parsons deliberately omitted recording one line of the message.

39

i.e., menstrual blood.

40

This verse is now lost.

41

i.e., the “elixir,” or sexual secretions.

42

The last word is often misquoted in secondar y sources as “louts.”

43

The Ship was published by Crowley in *The Equinox.*

44

Crowley claimed to have been Cagliostro \as well. \Presumably at least one of them is wrong.

45

The reference is to Cr owley’s *Heart of the Master* , which was written under the pseudonym Khaled Khan.

46

PETN is still used for demolition and special ef fects today.

47

[Publisher’s Note: After hearing that Feral House was issuing a biography of John Parsons, The Church of Scientology became inter ested in seeing how L. Ron Hubbar d would be depicted within. After contacting Scientology’s Office of Special Affairs in Los Angeles for information they wer e said to have concer ning Hubbar d’s involvement with N aval Intelligence, Feral House was sent, in June 1999, a copy of a cer tificate given Hubbar d for attending and completing “the pr escribed course in training for militar y government” at the Naval School of Militar y Government, Princeton

University. Scientology's package also contained a 19-page document by L. Fletcher Prouty, a former Colonel in the U.S. Air Force, author of *The Secret Team: The CIA and its Allies in Contr ol of the United States and the W orld*, and per haps best known as being the mysterious character played by Donald Sutherland in Oliver Stone's *J.F.K.*. Prouty's affidavit discusses the probability that Hubbard's Naval Records have been altered and "sheep-dipped."]